

Quarantine No. 37 and What it Means to American Gardening



EARLIER issues of the JOURNAL have recorded the different steps in the inauguration of the plant exclusion act and what has been the International Garden Club's attitude towards it. By the time this issue reaches its readers the act will have become effective and it now remains to set forth what one can and cannot do. As a permanent record we give the act complete, as reprinted from the official document issued by the Federal Horticultural Board.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FEDERAL HORTICULTURAL BOARD

NOTICE OF QUARANTINE NO. 37

NURSERY STOCK, PLANT, AND SEED QUARANTINE

[Effective on and after June 1, 1919, and superseding the rules and regulations governing the importation of nursery stock into the United States which were promulgated to take effect on and after July 1, 1916.]

The fact has been determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, and notice is hereby given, that there exist in Europe, Asia, Africa, Mexico, Central and South America, and other foreign countries and localities, certain injurious insects and fungous diseases new to and not heretofore widely distributed within and throughout the United States, which affect and are carried by nursery stock and other plants and seeds, the words "nursery stock and other plants and seeds" including, wherever used in this notice and the rules and regulations supplemental hereto, field-grown florists' stock, trees, shrubs, vines, cuttings, grafts, scions, buds, fruit pits and other seeds of fruit and ornamental trees or shrubs, also field, vegetable, and flower seeds, bedding plants, and other herbaceous plants, bulbs, and roots, and other plants and plant products for, or capable of, propagation.

Now, therefore, I, D. F. Houston, Secretary of Agriculture, under the authority conferred by the act of Congress approved August 20, 1912 (37 Stat., 315), do hereby declare that it is necessary, in order to prevent the further introduction into the United States of injurious insect pests and fungous diseases, to forbid, except as provided in the rules and regulations supplemental hereto, the importation into the United States of nursery stock and other plants and seeds from the foreign countries and localities named and from any other foreign locality or country.

On and after June 1, 1919, and until further notice, by virtue of said act of Congress approved August 20, 1912, the importation of nursery stock and other plants and seeds from the above named and all other foreign countries and localities, except as provided in the rules and regulations supplemental hereto, is prohibited.

This quarantine shall not apply to nursery stock and other plants and seeds covered by special quarantines and other restrictive orders now in force, a list of which is given in Appendix A of the rules and regulations supplemental hereto, nor to the importation by the United States Department of Agriculture of nursery stock and other plants and seeds for experimental or scientific purposes.

Done in the District of Columbia this 18th day of November, 1918.

[SEAL.] Witness my hand and the seal of the United States Department of Agriculture.

D. F. HOUSTON,
Secretary of Agriculture.

The final issuance of this act marks a step in American Gardening History of almost limitless significance. The practical exclusion of all that class of nursery stock that comes normally packed in balls of earth done up in gunny sacking, means that all Azaleas, Rhododendrons, Evergreens, Box, etc., are forbidden entry into the country. Ninety per cent of such stock found now in American gardens came from abroad in the young state. Its loss for future new work will limit us to those easily propagated shrubs and trees which may be grown here. While it is perhaps a confession of incompetence on the part of American nurserymen to say that they cannot propagate this stock in this country, it is the fact that generally speaking they have not done so. They have from the days of Prince and Parsons at Flushing, sent to Holland, Belgium, England and France for their young plants. The stoppage of this trade, which, more than anything else has been the means of carrying over the heritage of the older civilizations and concepts of gardening to the New World, can only result in a plethora of uninteresting landscapes, stocked with the conventional and the easily obtained.

Under this new régime no such plantings as are to be found at the older and finer private estates, the botanic gardens, or in the Moravian Cemetery at Staten Island, will be possible ten years hence. The plants simply will not be found in America in commercial quantities and a Board that sits at Washington and now has been granted immensely increased powers, says we must import no more. As to the merits of their case there are several opinions possible, as to the blighting effect of their action upon future ornamental planting in America there seems to be pretty general agreement.

Not only are the plants noted above excluded, but many others such as Peony, Dahlia etc., and much material imported for propagating purposes by American nurserymen. The contention of the Board that forbidden plants may still be imported through the Bureau of Plant Industry is of little horticultural significance. Beyond a few institutions no one is likely to use this doubtful privilege, which in any case applies "only to limited quantities."

The act as it now stands, (there is of course much agitation to have it repealed and the powers of the Federal Horticultural Board curtailed or withdrawn), appears as if it had been framed with deliberate intent to cripple the normal development of American gardening. The irony of the situation is that the Board has insisted from the first that on the contrary it was framed to protect our gardening and crops from destruction. Whether the truth lies on this side or on that, there is little likelihood of their assumptions going unchallenged. In fact the storm of abuse to which the Board seems relatively impervious may react so that 1920 may see the end not only of Plant Quarantine No. 37 but of the somewhat overzealous régime that created it.



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