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Swiss Confederation

Federal Office for the Environment FOEN

# Don't pack any risks!

Protect yourself and the  
environment.

**Animals and plants**  
that you bring back  
from a trip can be  
dangerous.



## **Why can imported plants and animals be problematic?**

There are plants, animals and other organisms that do not occur naturally in Switzerland but which have been introduced by humans. Many plants and animals brought here in the past have integrated into the ecosystem without apparent negative effects.

However, some imported plants and animals can become a problem: they cause allergic reactions or severe skin rashes, lead to crop losses or endanger biodiversity.

## **How do these plants and animals reach us?**

Plants and animals can come into Switzerland in many ways, for example as souvenirs. Any imported plant or animal could potentially become an invasive species with serious consequences – or it could carry a dangerous disease.



# **75%**

**of problematic plant species were introduced into Switzerland deliberately. For vertebrates, this amounts to a staggering 18 of 20 species.**

(FOEN report "Invasive alien species in Switzerland", 2006.)

## **Imported plants and animals can cause problems such as these:**

### **Red-eared slider**

This North American turtle came to Switzerland in large numbers via the pet trade. Many were released illegally into Swiss waters after their owners tired of them. Red-eared sliders can live for up to 40 years. Among other things, they feed on amphibian spawn and insect larvae, thereby endangering rare indigenous wildlife.



### ***Xylella fastidiosa***

This bacterium is one of the most dangerous plant pathogens. It affects many crops and ornamental plants such as cherry, vine, oleander or lavender. The plants then die off. *Xylella* has already done considerable damage in Italy, France and Spain (photo: dead olive trees in southern Italy.) In Switzerland, it was discovered on coffee plants from Central America in 2015, but luckily the bacterium has not yet established itself in this country.



### **Don't bring any plants or animals home with you from holidays.**

They can harm the environment, endanger health or cause damage to agriculture.



### **If you do want to import a plant or animal, be on the safe side:**

Find out about the plants and animals before you go. Have them checked by the appropriate authorities when you get back.

#### **Strict legal regulations have been in force since 1 January 2020.**

The import of plants, fruits, vegetables, cut flowers and seeds from countries outside the EU is prohibited. Animals must always be checked by the border veterinary service. Please also observe the regulations for the protection of endangered animal and plant species abroad!

## **Do you have any questions?**

This office can provide further information:

#### **Federal Office for the Environment FOEN**

Biodiversity and Landscape Division

Phone: 058 462 93 89

E-Mail: [riskiers-nicht@bafu.admin.ch](mailto:riskiers-nicht@bafu.admin.ch)



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