



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



International  
Plant Protection  
Convention



12 May  
**International Day  
of Plant Health**



**Get Involved!**

[FAO.org/plant-health-day](https://www.fao.org/plant-health-day)  
**#PlantHealthDay**

# GET INVOLVED GUIDE



Both our health and the health of our planet depend on plants. Plants are the source of the oxygen we breathe, much of the food we eat, the fibers that make our clothes and natural building materials.

Yet, up to **40 percent of food crops are lost** due to plant **pests and diseases** every year. This is affecting food security and agriculture, the main source of income for vulnerable rural communities.

**Climate change** and human activities are also affecting plant health, altering ecosystems and damaging biodiversity while creating new niches for pests to thrive. **International travel and trade**, which has tripled in volume in the last decade, is making pests and diseases appear in places they were never seen before.

Keeping plants healthy is essential for life on earth and all of us have a role to play. Join us for the global call to action this **#PlantHealthDay** on 12 May!

Events and outreach activities on the International Day of Plant Health will call for action worldwide to protect plants. This guide has all the tips you need to discover what you can do to help.

## Why an International Day of Plant Health?

The United Nations designated 12 May the International Day of Plant Health (IDPH) to raise global awareness of how protecting plant health can help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect biodiversity and the environment, and boost economic development. The Day is a key legacy of the International Year of Plant Health 2020.

# CALLS TO ACTION



## **Governments, policy makers and legislators**

need to prioritize plant health and protection, recognizing that it is fundamental to achieving the 2030 Agenda, particularly SDG2, Zero Hunger. Policies and legislation need to address and prevent pest and disease outbreaks and promote sustainable pests and pesticides management, while strengthening monitoring and reporting, and facilitating safe trade. They should ensure compliance with international plant health standards, invest in plant-health innovations, research and capacity development and empower national and regional plant protection organizations.

## **The general public**

should be aware of the risks involved in bringing plants and plant products across borders that may harbor pests and diseases. We need to be careful when ordering plants and plant products through channels such as e-commerce with postal services that bypass regular phytosanitary controls. It is important to purchase from reputable companies that provide international phytosanitary certification for safe trade of plants and plant products.

## **Media professionals**

can help communicate plant health information and key messages, including in local languages, to the broadest possible audience.

## **Schoolchildren**

can learn that plants can get “sick”, what this means for food security, biodiversity, the environment, and our economy, and how they can warn their family about the risks of “hitchhiking pests” that often travel with plants and plant products.

## **Farmers**

can prevent the spread of pests by using only certified pest-free seeds and seedlings; and regularly monitoring, controlling and reporting the occurrence of unusual pests on their farms. They should adopt environmentally friendly pest management practices – including those based on biological approaches that do not kill pollinators and use beneficial insects and organisms.

## **Non-Government Organizations and cooperatives**

working directly with farmers can raise their awareness of best practices for preventing and managing pests; and provide them with practical support in implementing these practices. They can coordinate actions among different plant health stakeholders especially at the local level.

## **Donors**

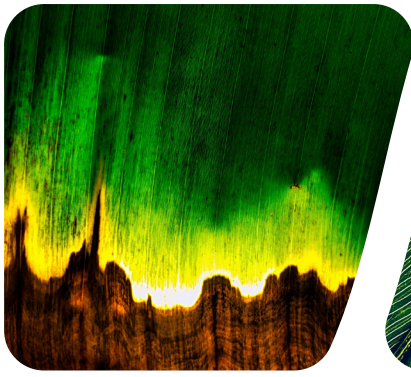
need to be regularly informed about opportunities for investing in new and existing plant health initiatives and technologies.

## **The private sector**

should promote environmentally friendly products and practices and invest in phytosanitary research and development.

## **The transportation and trade sectors**

should implement international standards, comply with existing phytosanitary legislation, contribute to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) standard setting process and be aware of innovative technologies such as electronic phytosanitary certificates (ePhytos).



## Plant health in numbers

- Plants make up 80 percent of the food we eat and produce 98 percent of the oxygen we breathe.
- Plant pests and diseases are responsible for the loss of up to 40 percent of global food crops, and for trade losses exceeding USD 220 billion in agricultural products annually.
- An adult Desert Locust can consume roughly its own weight, about 2 grams, in food every day. A 1 km<sup>2</sup>-sized swarm of 40 million Desert Locust could eat the same amount of food in one day as about 35 000 people.
- The annual value of trade in agricultural products has grown almost three-fold over the past decade, largely in emerging economies and developing countries, reaching USD 1.7 trillion.
- FAO estimates that agricultural production must rise by about 60 percent by 2050 in order to feed a larger and generally richer population.
- Climate change threatens to reduce not only the quantity of crops, lowering yields, but also the nutritious value. Rising temperatures also mean that more plant pests and diseases are appearing earlier and in places they were never seen before.
- Fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) is one of the most ubiquitous and destructive crop pests in the world, feasting on more than 80 different kinds of crops, including staple food security crops like wheat, rice, and sorghum. In 2021, FAO, through the **Global Action for Fall Armyworm Control**, successfully supported eight demonstration countries and more than 50 pilot countries in strengthening fall armyworm prevention, preparedness and management capacities by reaching over 107 000 participants through various training and outreach events and contributing to reduction of significant losses in maize yield.

# HOW TO PARTICIPATE



## Make a #PlantHealth commitment this #PlantHealthDay

by following us on social media. Everyone can contribute to plant health by staying connected and engaged with our posts, updates and initiatives. Amplify messages by posting and sharing content about the importance of protecting plant health. Check out the IDPH [Trello Board](#) for materials you can post on your social media account and website. Tag us, too! – [@FAO](#) and [@ippcnews](#).



## Organize an event

Plan an event or promotional activity to get the public involved – at universities, through farmer forums, festivals, fairs or tree planting ceremonies. You could also host a public lecture, panel or roundtable with government officials, educators, scientists, farmers and private sector representatives. Download our plant health [information materials](#) to give your event more impact.



## Bring the IDPH to your town or city

Why not approach municipality, outdoor advertisers, air and seaport authorities, or transportation companies to discuss the possibility of displaying [IDPH products](#) - such as the poster, web banner or promo video - on websites, billboards, at airports, ferry ports, buses, trams, in city subways, cinemas and more. Often, they are willing to promote a good cause on a pro-bono basis.



## Young people: save plants, save the planet!

Educators can include plant health in lesson plans or youth activities and celebrate #PlantHealthDay. Check out our [Activity Book](#) to learn about the importance of plant health and simple actions we can all take to help keep plants safe. Discover how plant health, our health, environmental protection and climate change – are all connected.



## Engage the media

Contact the media and call on them to spread the call for action and share plant health messages widely in print or online media. You can also try to initiate or take part in discussion panels, press conferences, media briefings and in radio or TV call-in or talk shows. Organize a plant health media workshop where journalists have a chance to meet and make contact with plant protection officers, scientists, researchers, etc.

## Promote the IDPH on your web page

Download the IDPH web banner from the [Asset Bank](#) and add it to your web page. Link to the global [website](#) to help us spread the word.

## Join us at the global event!

Register now for the FAO high-level event on the occasion of the first IDPH on 12 May. The agenda will be available shortly on the [IDPH website](#).

## Use the International Day of Plant Health visuals

Download the official IDPH digital assets from the [Asset Bank](#) including the visual identity, web banner, web button, posters, save-the-date e-card, and virtual background, and share them on your website, social media platforms and virtual event spaces. You can also produce custom merchandise using the IDPH visual identity such as t-shirts, caps and mugs to further promote the IDPH brand. If your event already has a visual identity, yet you wish to associate it with FAO, contact us to request the IDPH ribbon at [idph@fao.org](mailto:idph@fao.org).



## COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

IDPH products are available in six official FAO languages in the [Asset Bank](#) and on the [IDPH Trello Board](#). The workspace is designed to be shared easily with external partners.

- ✓ Get Involved Guide
- ✓ Poster
- ✓ Website
- ✓ Trello board with social media assets
- ✓ Banner/Backdrop for events
- ✓ Promo Video

## Let us know how you're celebrating the International Day of Plant Health

There are various ways to celebrate the International Day of Plant Health. We encourage you to share details about your events or initiatives by sending us an email on the event details, photos, videos and links to your website and social media posts at [idph@fao.org](mailto:idph@fao.org). We'd love to feature your events in the post-event Impact Report! See for example past celebrations around the world in the [2023 IDPH Impact Report](#) and [celebrations in 2022](#).



## Enhance your plant health knowledge



Explore a variety of e-learning courses developed by the FAO e-Learning Academy, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat and partners. Whether you're a professional seeking to deepen your expertise in plant protection or a newcomer excited to learn, these courses offer flexible learning options and cover topics such as pest risk analysis, plant pest surveillance techniques and the implementation of international phytosanitary standards. Some courses also offer a badge that you can display on your LinkedIn profile! Visit the [IPPC website e-learning courses page](#) to find out more.

