

WEEKLY NEWS COLUMN
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WHAT TO DO WITH UNSOLICITED SEED PACKAGES

It's been over a month since the news first reported consumers in Kansas and Oklahoma receiving unsolicited packages of seed through the mail. At that time, we weren't hearing anything locally about citizens receiving packages, but in the last week, our office has fielded multiple calls. The packages appear to have originated from China and/or the Middle East and are received through the mail. Little is known about the seeds, what they are, or where they originated from, but this is a regulatory issue for which the Kansas Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture have oversight for.

Unsolicited seeds should not be opened or planted. The origination and the type of seeds contained is unknown and could be harmful to the natural ecosystem of this area. Packets could contain invasive species or could introduce diseases to local plants and/or livestock. Invasive plant species are especially harmful to the local environment as they may destroy native plants, and insects or destroy crops.

The Kansas Department of Agriculture works to prevent the introduction of invasive species and to protect Kansas Agriculture. Individuals who receive unsolicited packages of seeds in the mail should NOT plant these seeds, and, if they are in a sealed package, do not open it. Instead, please contact the KDA's plant protection and weed control program at 785-564-6698, or email kda.ppwc@ks.gov. Individuals may also go online to www.agriculture.ks.gov/Seed to submit an online complaint.

Any questions regarding unsolicited seeds should be directed to the KDA. For additional information about local agriculture programs and Cowley County Extension, contact the Cowley County Extension Office at 620-221-5450 or email Kelsey Nordyke (klordyke@ksu.edu).

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