

“Buzzy” Strawberry Mini Grow Kits Recall

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) is seeking public support for a product recall of a strawberry seed growing kit.

“Buzzy” Strawberry Mini Grow Kits which comprise small packages of strawberry seeds, a clay pot and compressed potting mix were imported by Tui Products Ltd and sold through The Warehouse stores nationwide between 1 September and 12 November 2011.

MAF Response Manager Glen Neal says the seeds in the kits were imported and mistakenly released for sale when they should have been quarantined and tested for a range of plant viruses.

“If these seeds are planted and get out into the wider environment, they have the potential to introduce viral diseases to several horticultural crops including strawberries,” he says.

“While we think the risk of the seeds in the kits being infected and then viruses subsequently being transmitted from adult plants to commercial horticultural operations is very low, we are keen to get back or account for as many kits as possible to further minimise any risk.

“The seeds and any resulting plants or fruit do not pose any human health risk. The concern is about plant health,” Mr Neal says.

Nearly 7,000 kits were purchased by The Warehouse from the importer Tui Products Ltd. Of those, 1362 kits have been sold and 5,540 have been recovered and will be destroyed.

“We strongly encourage people who have bought these Buzzy kits to return them to any The Warehouse store nationwide. The company has offered to take back any unplanted seed kits and refund the full purchase price of \$3.99 each,” Mr Neal says.

On behalf of the importer, The Warehouse has also offered to provide refunds on proof of purchase (either empty packaging or receipts) for any kits that have subsequently been planted.

MAF is not encouraging the return of actual plants removed from their packaging to The Warehouse.

“Where people have planted the seeds and grown them into plants, we hope they will think of the wellbeing of New Zealand’s horticultural industries and destroy the plants. We recommend plants and their containers, or plants removed from the garden or containers be sealed in a plastic bag and further sealed in a second bag before being disposed of in the household rubbish. It is important the plants are not composted or put out with green waste.”

MAF is still investigating the circumstances behind the seed importation and release so doesn’t yet know why they were not quarantined.

“MAF is appreciative of support from The Warehouse Ltd and Tui Products Ltd in removing the kits from shelves and recalling those that were sold.”

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STRAWBERRY GROW KIT

INCLUDES CONTAINER, SEEDS, SOIL AND INSTRUCTIONS