

To importers of ornamental plants

The Board for Gene Technology would like to remind importers of ornamental plants that the import, cultivation and marketing of genetically modified (GM) plants are subject to an authorisation, which, in the case of ornamental plants, is provided for in the Gene Technology Act (377/1995).

In 2017 a large number of GM petunia varieties that had no marketing authorisation were found on the EU ornamental plants market, including in Finland. The GM petunias had to be withdrawn from the market in the EU, causing substantial economic losses to the breeders, producers and sellers of the varieties. Petunia varieties currently in production are still being tested, and it will no longer be possible to cultivate or sell GM varieties without a marketing authorisation. No authorisation requests for the cultivation or marketing of GM petunia varieties have yet been submitted in the EU. Note: no GM material has been found in mini petunias, also known as 'Million Bells' (*Calibrachoa* sp.).

So far the only GM ornamental plants to have received marketing authorisation in the EU are five lines of fresh-cut genetically modified carnations (*Dianthus caryophyllus*), the colour of whose flowers has been changed to blue. They are cultivated outside the EU. Information on the presence of genetic modification must always be included with the fresh-cut GM carnations, and such an indication is necessary also when reselling them. Authorisation requests pursuant to the Gene Technology Directives have not been submitted for other ornamental plants.

The Board for Gene Technology recommends that importers of ornamental plants ensure already when ordering propagating material or seedlings for resale that the varieties in question are not genetically modified and ask the supplier to confirm this in writing.

GM ornamental plants that do not have marketing authorisation in the EU may only be purchased for contained use or field trials ('deliberate release into the environment for purposes other than marketing') provided this is done in compliance with the notification and application procedures laid down in the Gene Technology Act. **However, the resale of GM plants is not possible without an EU-level marketing authorisation.** For more information on notification and application procedures, please visit the website of the Board for Gene Technology (<http://geenitekniikanlautakunta.fi>).

The status of petunia varieties identified as genetically modified may be checked on Evira's website: <https://www.evira.fi/kasvit/myynti-ja-markkinointi/muuntogeeniset-kasvituotteet-gm/gm-petuniat/>.

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