

# Officials warn about mysterious seeds possibly mailed from China

The Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA) has been notified that several Georgia residents have received unsolicited packages containing seeds that appear to have originated from China. Recipients are strongly advised not to open the packages or plant the seeds.

“At this time, we are not sure what the seeds are and therefore are urging everyone to be exceedingly vigilant,” Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary W. Black says. “If you have received one of these packages in the mail, please use extreme caution by not touching the contents and securing the package in a plastic bag.”

The types of seeds in the packages are unknown at this time and may be invasive plant species. The packages were sent by mail and may have Chinese writing on them.

Invasive species wreak havoc on the environment, displace or destroy native plants and insects and severely damage crops. Taking steps to prevent their introduction

is the most effective method of reducing both the risk of invasive species infestations and the cost to control and mitigate those infestations.

The mysterious, unsolicited packages of seeds being sent to homes across America – prompting agriculture departments in at least 31 states to issue warnings against planting them – may be invasive species and could be tied to a fake product review scam, police and officials are saying.

The packages, based on photographs and statements from officials, appeared to have been shipped by China’s state-owned postal company and contained Chinese lettering on the exterior, advertising products ranging from jewelry to toys.

But, what’s actually inside seem to be random plant seeds. States from coast to coast have been urging residents to report the unexpected deliveries to their local agriculture departments over concerns that the seeds could be invasive or

harmful species.

The packages have garnered the attention of federal investigators -- with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) working alongside the Department of Homeland Security’s Customs and Border Protection and other federal and state agencies.

“Do not plant seeds from unknown origins,” the USDA urged in a statement.

Officials in several states said there didn’t appear to be a clear pattern to the packages, which have been showing up at homes in the city, suburbs, and in rural areas. The number of packages being reported also varied. In Indiana, for instance, an official with the state attorney general’s office said it had received only a handful of reports, while in Ohio, officials have received roughly 150 calls about the packages over the past month.

It’s not the first time this type of scam has surfaced. In 2018, a Massachusetts couple who kept receiving mystery packages from Amazon containing items ranging



from USB-powered humidifiers to rechargeable dog collars feared they were being targeted.

Here’s how the scam works: a seller trying to boost the ratings of their own merchandise sets up a fake email account to create an Amazon profile, then purchases the items with a gift card and ships them to the address of a random person.

Once the package is delivered, the owner of the Amazon account is then listed as a “verified buyer” of the product and can write a positive review of it that gets higher placement on product pages because of

their status, James Thomson, a former business consultant for Amazon told the Boston Globe at the time when asked about the couple’s deliveries.

However, the deliveries of the plant seeds are more widespread and it’s not immediately clear which e-commerce website the fake reviews may be appearing on, if this is the motive behind the packages.

Anyone who has received unsolicited seeds in the mail from China or any other country is encouraged to contact the GDA Seed Lab at 229-386-3145 or email SeedLab@agr.georgia.gov.



## Seminole County 4-H hosts Water Olympics

On July 21, at the Seminole County Extension Office local 4-H’ers enjoyed a fun-filled Wacky Water Day. 4-H’ers competed in various water relays including water balloon pinata, soaked sponge relay, the penguin waddle, waitress tray relay, and water cup relay. 4-H’ers also raced on their individual slip-n-slides, practiced

their aim tossing water balloons at targets, saved the frozen army man, and raced to see who could thaw their frozen socks and t-shirts the fastest. Points were awarded to the top three placing individuals for each activity and a winner was named for 4-H Water Olympics. Fun was had by all while following all UGA/CDC guidelines.



Participating 4-H students included CT Fowler, Landon Smith, Courtney Cannon, Jolie Grand, Paislee Rose, Rylee Herrington and Emma Earnest.

## Paerosol Global Partners to bring 140 jobs to Southwest Georgia

Governor Brian P. Kemp announced last Thursday that Paerosol Global Partners LLC (PGP), a manufacturer of disinfectant solutions and spraying instruments, plans to invest nearly \$17 million in building a new facility in Bainbridge. This brand new facility in Decatur County will mark the company’s first location in Georgia and create 140 new jobs for the Southwest Georgia area.

This expansion to Bainbridge will bring several different job opportunities to the area, including careers in management, accounting, logistics, and production. Individuals who are interested in working for PGP are encouraged to contact David Pobiak at david.pobiak@paerosol.com.

“PGP’s disinfectant products are in high demand, and we are proud to welcome this innovative company to Georgia,” said Governor Kemp. “Their decision to bring their operations to our state is a testament to the way we do business and the incredible assets we provide companies in need of a dependable workforce, unmatched logistics network, and great quality of life. I look forward to seeing all of the opportunities this expansion creates for the hardworking people of Southwest Georgia.”

Based in Florida, PGP manufactures and assembles solutions that effectively eliminate air- and surface-borne pathogens such as

mold, bacteria, and viruses. The company has acquired an exclusive license from the U.S. government to sell and distribute this technology, which was developed by the U.S. Department of Energy.

“PGP is committed to making a difference in the quality of people’s lives. We are looking forward to building our new facility in Bainbridge, Georgia. The community has welcomed us with open arms, making our decision to choose Georgia over any other part of the nation a seamless process for us,” said PGP’s Senior Vice President of Strategic Alliances and Sales David Pobiak. “The professionalism, infrastructure, and cooperation we have experienced provides us the ability to create a thriving business and, in turn, contribute to this burgeoning community by way of job production and access to our technology in local schools, hospitals, and all places of gathering to help ensure safety against existing and emerging pathogens.”

Georgia remains a national leader in advanced manufacturing and continues to attract new business to its southern regions. Georgia’s strength across multiple manufacturing sectors resulted in a GDP of \$64.7 billion in 2019, and the Georgia Department of Labor estimated that there were 367,300 manufacturing jobs in the state as of May 2020.

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## Child Find Notice

In accordance with IDEA regulations, the Seminole County School system seeks to ensure that all disabled students (ages 3-21) who are in need of special education within its jurisdiction are identified, located, and evaluated, including those attending private school and home school. Final identification of students with disabilities and programming for such students occurs only after an appropriate evaluation and a determination by a Multi-disciplinary Placement Team.

If the “child find” process indicates that a student may require special education and supportive services in order to benefit from regular education, the student shall be referred to the Multidisciplinary Placement Team to determine the student’s eligibility for special education services.

If you know a child with a disability that is not being served, please notify:  
Seminole County Schools – Special Education Department  
203 E. 6th Street  
Donalsonville, GA 39845  
Phone (229) 524-6420    Fax (229) 515-8933

OR

South Georgia Learning Resource System  
915 S. McKinley Street  
Albany, GA 31701  
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**229-383-4149    allcarepharmacyga.com**

## Cooler Photo Contest!

Stay cool and enter the *Donalsonville News*’s Sizzling Seminole Summer photo contest. Show us how you beat the heat in a Seminole County Summer. Send your entries to [news@donalsonvillemews.com](mailto:news@donalsonvillemews.com) by 5 p.m. July 31st. The “coolest” shot will appear on the front page of the August 6th edition of the *Donalsonville News*. Photos must contain a Southwest Georgia resident and must be an image you would be proud to share with your mother.