Растителна защита
електронно списание за растителна защита
семена, торове и земеделие
ISSN 2815-522X

'International Plant Health Day 2026: Plant Biosecurity as a Key to Food Security'

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Date 12.05.2026 | **Issue** 5/2026 | **ISSN** 2815-522X | **Language** EN
www.plant-protection.com/article/2414?lang=en



On May 12, 2026, the world marks the International Day of Plant Health. This year, the global initiative, led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), has chosen an exceptionally relevant theme: "Plant Biosecurity for Food Security and Nutrition."

Why is Plant Health of Critical Importance?

Plants are the backbone of life on Earth, as they provide 80% of the food we consume and produce 98% of the oxygen we breathe. However, they are under constant phytosanitary and climatic pressure. Pests and diseases are responsible for the loss of up to 40% of global agricultural crops each year. This not only leads to economic losses in agriculture exceeding 220 billion dollars annually but also directly threatens the food supply of millions of people worldwide.

The Focus in 2026: Plant Biosecurity

The theme for 2026 emphasizes that prevention is the best defense. Biosecurity is the first line of defense for our food systems. In the context of a changing climate and intensive global trade, pests are adapting and spreading faster than ever before.

Protecting plants through strict biosecurity measures means:

Ensuring Food Supply: More healthy crops mean more and better-quality food on the table.

Economic Stability: Safeguarding the livelihoods of farmers and agricultural producers.

Preserving Biodiversity: Preventing the spread of invasive species that destroy local ecosystems.

How Can Each of Us Help?

Protecting plant health is not solely the task of governments, customs authorities, and scientists. Every individual can contribute to global biosecurity through a few simple steps:

Be careful when traveling: Do not carry plants, fruits, vegetables, seeds, or soil across borders. They can be carriers of dangerous pests and diseases that are not visible to the naked eye.

Shop wisely online: When ordering plants or seeds from abroad over the internet, always check their origin and ensure the shipment meets phytosanitary requirements.

Report irregularities: If you notice an unusual accumulation of pests or unfamiliar diseases on plants in your area, inform the competent authorities (in Bulgaria, this is the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency – BFSA).

Caring for plant health is caring for the future of the planet. Let the International Day of Plant Health be an occasion to realize that when we protect plants, we protect life itself.