

From: Midwest Invasive Plant Network <[mipn@mortonarb.org](mailto:mipn@mortonarb.org)>  
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Subject: Special Bulletin: Mystery Seeds in the Mail  
Reply-To: Midwest Invasive Plant Network <[mipn@mortonarb.org](mailto:mipn@mortonarb.org)>



## We at MIPN hope this special notice finds you well!

As many have seen in the news over the last few days, people have been receiving unsolicited packages of seeds in the mail. The packages usually originate in China and are marked as containing earrings or similar small items. When the shipping container is opened, the actual contents are packages of seeds like the ones in the header image.

Our national and jurisdictional authorities have acted quickly and are in close agreement about what recipients of these seeds should do and not do. Here's the run down:

### DO NOT:

- Open the seed packets
- Plant the seeds indoors or outdoors
- Put the seeds in household compost
- Put the seeds in the garbage

### PLEASE DO:

Follow the guidance of the relevant authority for your location, linked below:

- [Illinois](#)
- [Indiana](#)
- [Iowa](#)
- [Michigan](#)
- [Minnesota](#)
- [Missouri](#)
- [Ohio](#)
- [Wisconsin](#)
- [Canada \(all provinces\)](#)

### What Gives?

There is no indication at this time that the seeds are being sent for the express purpose of spreading invasive plants in North America. [Analysis of mystery seeds in Utah](#) turned up some garden roses and, more troublesome, a species of Chinese bush clover, which has a high likelihood of being invasive in parts of the Midwest, given our experiences with [Lespedeza cuneata](#).

[USDA APHIS](#) postulates that the seeds are being sent as part of a "brushing" scam where the motive is to generate "verified" product reviews on big retail websites for products that may not actually exist or may be of poor quality.

Conclusion? 2020 sure is wild!

**Happy to help.**

Please direct any questions, comments or feedback to:

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