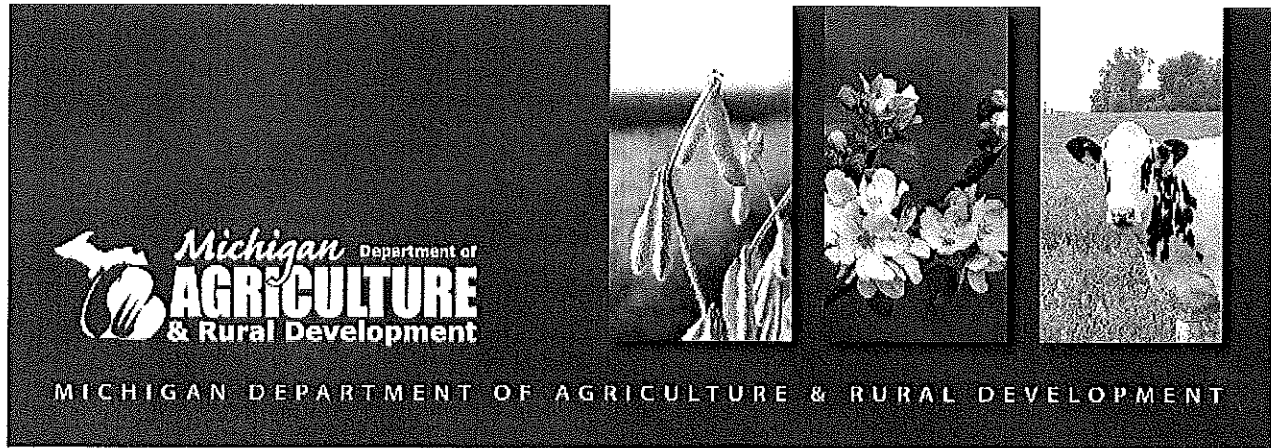


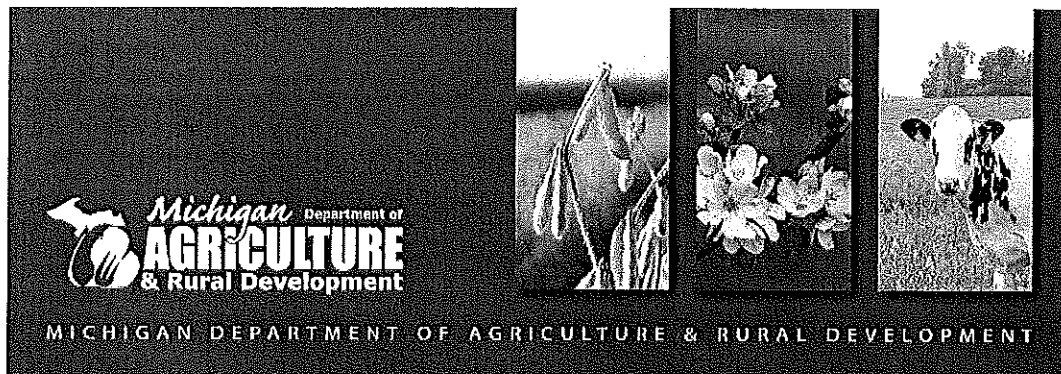
**From:** Michigan Dept of Agriculture & Rural Development [mailto:MDARD@govsubscriptions.michigan.gov]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 31, 2020 2:19 AM  
**To:** Sebolt, Audrey <asebolt@michfb.com>  
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## MDARD advises consumers on what to do if they receive unsolicited packages containing seeds

07/30/2020



For immediate release: July 30, 2020  
To report: 800-292-3939  
Program contact: Robin Rosenbaum, 517-490-1301  
Media contact: Jennifer Holton, 517-284-5724

## MDARD advises consumers on what to do if they receive unsolicited packages containing seeds

LANSING – The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) continues to receive multiple reports of consumers receiving unsolicited packages of seeds in the mail that appear to be sent from China and other countries. MDARD is currently working with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to investigate the situation.

The USDA believes these packages may be the result of a "brushing scam" where people receive unsolicited items from a seller who then posts false customer reviews to boost sales. Most of the mail misleadingly states the packages contain jewelry, but actually contain seeds of varying size, color, and shape. The USDA is collecting the seeds and packaging to determine if they are of concern to agriculture or the environment.

Consumers who have received unsolicited seeds should take the following steps:

- Do not open or plant the seeds. If seed packets are already opened, place all material, including the packaging, in a sealed bag.
- Fill out a brief questionnaire and mail the seeds, and the packaging to:

USDA/APHIS/PPQ  
11200 Metro Airport Center Dr.  
Suite 140  
Romulus, MI 48174  
Attn: USDA Identification Staff

- If seeds have already been planted or if unable or unwilling to mail the seeds and packaging, contact USDA State Plant Health Director Craig Kellogg at 734-942-9005 or via email at [craig.kellogg@usda.gov](mailto:craig.kellogg@usda.gov) for guidance.
- Do not put seeds or plant material in a compost pile.

"While the seeds are not expected to be harmful to humans or pets, they could contain an invasive species or accidentally introduce a pest or disease that could pose a serious risk to agriculture or the environment," said Robin Rosenbaum, MDARD's State Plant Regulatory Official. "We appreciate everyone's cooperation and assistance in safeguarding Michigan agriculture and natural resources."

For more information on MDARD's Pesticide and Plant Pesticide Management Division, visit [www.michigan.gov/mdard](http://www.michigan.gov/mdard).

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