Chapter 15.08 RCW
HORTICULTURAL PESTS AND DISEASES

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RCW 15.08.010 Definitions. As used in this chapter:
(1) "Supervisor" means an assistant director known as the supervisor of plant industry.
(2) "Horticultural premises" includes orchards, vineyards, nurseries, berry farms, vegetable farms, cultivated cranberry marshes, packing houses, dryhouses, warehouses, depots, docks, cars, vessels and other places where nursery stock, fruits, vegetables and other horticultural products are grown, stored, packed, shipped, held for shipment or delivery, sold or otherwise disposed of.
(3) "Nursery stock" includes, but is not limited to, any horticultural, floricultural, viticultural, and vegetable plant, for planting, propagation or ornamentation, growing or otherwise, including cut plant material.
"Pests and diseases" means, but is not limited to, any living stage of any insect, mite, nematode, slug, snail, protozoa, or other invertebrate animal, bacteria, fungus, other parasitic plant, weed, or reproductive part thereof, virus or any organism similar to or allied with any of the foregoing, or any infectious substance, which can directly or indirectly injure or cause disease or damage in or to any plant or parts thereof, or any processed, manufactured, or other products of plants.

(5) "Nuisance" means any plant, produce or property found in any commercial area upon which is found any pest or disease that is or may be a source of infestation of other properties.

(6) "Commercial area" means a district where any horticultural product is being produced to the extent that a producer is dependent thereon, in whole or in part, for his or her livelihood.

(7) "Infect," and its derivatives "infected," "infecting," and "infection," means affected by or infested with pests or diseases as above defined.

(8) "Disinfect," and its derivatives, means the control, cure, or eradication of such pests or diseases by cutting or destroying infected parts or the application of effective pesticides. [2010 c 8 § 6005; 1981 c 296 § 4; 1961 c 11 § 15.08.010. Prior: (i) 1943 c 150 § 1, part; 1937 c 148 § 1, part; 1927 c 311 § 1, part; 1921 c 141 § 1, part; 1915 c 166 § 1, part; Rem. Supp. 1943 § 2839, part. (ii) 1941 c 20 § 2; Rem. Supp. 1941 § 2849-1b. (iii) 1941 c 20 § 3; Rem. Supp. 1941 § 2849-1c. (iv) 1941 c 20 § 4; Rem. Supp. 1941 § 2849-1d. (v) 1923 c 37 § 3, part; 1921 c 141 § 4, part; 1915 c 166 § 5, part; RRS § 2843, part.]

Severability—1981 c 296: "If any provision of this amendatory act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1981 c 296 § 40.]

RCW 15.08.020 Methods of prevention, control and disinfection.
The following methods shall be used for the prevention, control or disinfection of pests and diseases:

1. Bacterial diseases, removal and destruction of infected plant or part thereof, care being used to disinfect removal tools to prevent infection therefrom;
2. Fungus diseases, spraying with effective fungicide;
3. Chewing or sucking insect pests, spraying with effective insecticide;
4. Fungus insect pests, spraying with other effective solutions or emulsions described in circulars issued by the director. [1961 c 11 § 15.08.020. Prior: 1923 c 37 § 3, part; 1921 c 141 § 4, part; 1915 c 166 § 5, part; RRS § 2843, part.]

RCW 15.08.025 Disinfection of fruit trees—Procedures to be followed. The method for disinfecting fruit trees required to be disinfected under the provisions of this chapter shall be as prescribed in the official published recommendations of the Washington State University for the proper prevention, control and eradication of pests and diseases of fruit trees.
Whenever specific recommendations for disinfecting fruit trees are not set forth in the official published recommendations of the Washington State University, the generally accepted horticultural practices for the prevention, control and eradication of any pests and diseases in the producing area shall be used.

The burden of proving that the proper procedures as set forth in this section have been followed shall be upon the person ordered to disinfect fruit trees.

The disinfection of fruit trees as in this section set forth shall in no way limit the authority of the inspection board to determine that such fruit trees constitute a nuisance and thus shall be subject to removal as provided for in this chapter. [1981 c 296 § 5; 1965 c 27 § 2.]

Severability—1981 c 296: See note following RCW 15.08.010.

Purpose—1965 c 27: "The production of tree fruits in the state of Washington is a major agricultural industry promoting the general economic welfare of the state and beneficial to the health of the public. The proper maintenance of fruit tree orchards to insure the continued and increased benefits to the health and welfare of the state makes it necessary to prevent, eradicate and control any pests or diseases which are or may be injurious to such fruit trees and the produce therefrom. Such prevention, eradication and control of pests and diseases which are or may be injurious to fruit trees and their crops may require chemical or biological control or removal of host trees which may be hosts and breeding places for such diseases and pests. The provisions of this act are adopted under the police power of the state for the purpose of protecting its health and general welfare, presently and in the future." [1965 c 27 § 1.]

RCW 15.08.030 Duty to disinfect, destroy—Disposal of cuttings.
It is the duty of every owner, shipper, consignee, or other person in charge of fruits, vegetables, or nursery stock, and the owner, lessee, or occupant of horticultural premises, to use sufficient methods of prevention to keep said properties free from infection by pests or disease. In event any of said properties become infected it is the duty of said persons to use effective methods to control or destroy the infection by disinfection as in this chapter defined. All fruits, vegetables and nursery stock which cannot be successfully disinfected shall be promptly destroyed.

In counties where black stem rust infection occurs every owner or person in charge of premises on which barberry bushes of the rust-producing varieties are growing shall forthwith destroy such bushes.

Within forty-eight hours after removal of any cuttings or prunings from bacterially infected trees or plants infected with fruit tree leaf roller egg clusters the person removing same shall disinfect or destroy them by burning or scorching. [1961 c 11 § 15.08.030. Prior: (i) 1927 c 311 § 3; 1923 c 37 § 2; 1915 c 166 § 4; RRS § 2842. (ii) 1921 c 141 § 8; 1915 c 166 § 18; RRS § 2856.]

RCW 15.08.040 Authority to enter premises—Interference unlawful. The director, supervisor, and horticultural inspectors are authorized to at any time enter horticultural premises and any
structure where fruit, vegetables, nursery stock, or horticultural products are grown or situated for any purpose, to inspect the same for infection.

No person shall hinder or interfere with any such officer in entering or inspecting or performing any duty imposed upon him or her. [2010 c 8 § 6006; 1961 c 11 § 15.08.040. Prior: 1915 c 166 § 9; RRS § 2847.]

RCW 15.08.050 Condemnation of infected property—Disposal of, unlawful. If the premises or property inspected is found to be infected the inspecting officer shall condemn the same and serve upon the owner or person in charge thereof a written notice of the condemnation, describing the premises or property with reasonable certainty, and ordering the infected portion to be disinfected, or to be destroyed if incapable of disinfection, within a time and in a manner stated therein, and giving notice that if the order is not complied with in the time stated, the officer will disinfect or destroy the property and charge the expense thereof to the owner or against the premises.

No person shall ship, sell, or otherwise dispose of or part with possession of, or transport, any such condemned property until all requirements of said notice and order are complied with and written permit of the inspector so to do is issued. [1961 c 11 § 15.08.050. Prior: 1943 c 150 § 4, part; 1929 c 150 § 1, part; 1925 ex.s. c 108 § 1, part; 1919 c 195 § 2 1/2, part; 1915 c 166 § 10, part; Rem. Supp. 1943 § 2848, part.]

RCW 15.08.060 Condemnation of infected property—Notice to owner—Division into classes. Said notice of condemnation shall also grant permission to the owner or person in charge of infected fruit, vegetables, or nursery stock to divide the same into classes:

(1) The portion not infected;
(2) The infected portion which is capable of successful disinfection; and
(3) The infected portion which is incapable of successful disinfection and must be destroyed.

Said notice shall require the owner or person to disinfect class (2) and destroy class (3) within the time stated. [1961 c 11 § 15.08.060. Prior: 1943 c 150 § 4, part; 1929 c 150 § 1, part; 1925 ex.s. c 108 § 1, part; 1919 c 195 § 2 1/2, part; 1915 c 166 § 10, part; Rem. Supp. 1943 § 2848, part.]

RCW 15.08.070 Condemnation of infected property—Use of condemned fruit, vegetables—Permit. In the case of fruit or vegetables which cannot be successfully disinfected the inspector may grant to the owner or person in charge thereof a written permit to use the condemned products for stock feed, or manufacture the same into by-products, or ship them to a by-product factory; and it is unlawful for the person receiving such permit to sell or dispose of such products without first having the same manufactured into a by-product or shipped to a by-product factory, or to divert any such shipment when made, or for the consignee of such shipment to sell or dispose of the same until it is manufactured into a by-product. [1961 c 11 §
RCW 15.08.080 Condemnation of infected property—Service of notice—Personal, constructive, substituted. Personal service of said notice shall be made upon the person in possession or in charge of said premises or property if possible. If such person is not the owner, or personal service cannot be made on such person, then a copy of the notice shall be mailed or telegraphed to the owner at his or her home or post office address if known or can with reasonable diligence be ascertained. If personal service cannot be made upon any person in possession or charge of the premises or property and the name and address of the owner thereof are not known or cannot be so ascertained, then the notice shall be served by posting the same in some conspicuous place on the premises where the property to be disinfected or destroyed is situated, which service by posting shall be construed to be constructive personal service upon such owner. If the name and address of the owner are not known or cannot be so ascertained, service upon the person in possession or charge of the premises or property shall constitute substituted personal service upon the owner, in the absence of fraud or gross neglect. [2010 c 8 § 6007; 1961 c 11 § 15.08.080. Prior: 1943 c 150 § 4, part; 1929 c 150 § 1, part; 1925 ex.s. c 108 § 1, part; 1919 c 195 § 2 1/2, part; 1915 c 166 § 10, part; Rem. Supp. 1943 § 2848, part.]

RCW 15.08.090 Condemnation of infected property—Duty to comply—Inspector's duty on failure—Lien for costs. Except as hereinabove provided, upon service of said notice the owner or person in possession or charge of the premises or property shall comply with its terms within the time specified. In case of their failure so to do, the inspector may enter the premises and perform or cause to be performed the services required in the notice. He or she shall keep an accurate account of the expense of performing said services, which shall become a lien on the premises or property which may be foreclosed in the manner herein provided. The lien on personal property shall have preference over all other liens.

If the inspector has not disinfected or destroyed the property it may be declared a nuisance as herein provided and treated as such. [2010 c 8 § 6008; 1961 c 11 § 15.08.090. Prior: (i) 1943 c 150 § 4, part; 1929 c 150 § 1, part; 1925 ex.s. c 108 § 1, part; 1919 c 195 § 2 1/2, part; 1915 c 166 § 10, part; Rem. Supp. 1943 § 2848, part. (ii) 1943 c 150 § 5; 1935 c 168 § 4; 1931 c 27 § 2; 1927 c 311 § 4; 1915 c 166 § 11; Rem. Supp. 1943 § 2849.]

RCW 15.08.100 Foreclosure of lien—Sale—Notice of impounding—Contents. The officer disinfecting personal property may enforce the lien thereon provided for in RCW 15.08.090 by impounding and selling the property. He or she shall give notice of the impounding and proposed sale by posting a written notice in a conspicuous place upon the premises where the property is impounded and serve said notice upon the owner or person in charge of the property in the manner provided for service of notice to disinfect in RCW 15.08.080. Said
notice shall state that the property, describing it with reasonable certainty, has been impounded, where it is situated, the amount of costs and expenses charged against it, and that unless same are paid within a specified time the property will be sold to satisfy said charges, accrued transportation and storage charges, if any, and costs of sale. Said specified time shall not be less than ten days after giving of the notice, except that immediate sale may be made of perishable fruits or vegetables. [2010 c 8 § 6009; 1961 c 11 § 15.08.100. Prior: 1915 c 166 § 12, part; RRS § 2850, part.]

**RCW 15.08.110 Sale proceeds—Deficiency—Action to recover.** Such sales may be either at public auction or private sale, whichever, in the sound discretion of the officer, will be to the best interests of the state and owner of the property. The proceeds thereof shall be applied to payment of: First, costs of sale; second, expenses of disinfection; third, accrued transportation and storage charges. The balance, if any, shall be paid to the owner.

Should such proceeds be insufficient to pay the costs of sale and expenses of disinfection, the deficiency may be recovered from the owner or person in charge in an action brought in the name of the state on the relation of the director by the prosecuting attorney of the county when directed to do so by the attorney general. [1961 c 11 § 15.08.110. Prior: 1915 c 166 § 12, part; RRS § 2850, part.]

**RCW 15.08.120 Record of proceedings—Verified copy as evidence.** The inspector shall make and sign a record of the proceedings, stating the name of the owner or reputed owner of the property, if known; location of the property, date of inspection and the results thereof; date and manner of giving notice to disinfect; failure to disinfect; disinfection by the inspector; the cost thereof in detail; date and manner of giving notice of impounding and sale; date, place, and manner of sale; name of the purchaser; and amount of the proceeds and disposition thereof.

Upon demand of the owner or person in charge of the property, the inspector shall furnish him or her with a verified copy of the record, and tender him or her the balance of the proceeds. If no demand is made within thirty days of the sale, or if the tender is refused, the inspector shall file a verified copy of the record with and remit any balance of the proceeds to the director, and if it is not claimed by the owner within six months, it shall be deposited in the state treasury.

The record or a verified copy thereof shall be admissible in evidence as prima facie evidence of the truth of its contents. [2010 c 8 § 6010; 1961 c 11 § 15.08.120. Prior: 1915 c 166 § 12, part; RRS § 2850, part.]

**RCW 15.08.130 Record of premises disinfected—Costs—Lien.** The inspector disinfecting any horticultural premises shall make and sign a detailed record of the proceedings, stating the legal description of the premises; give the name of the owner or reputed owner; the date of inspection and the results thereof; date and manner of giving notice to disinfect; failure to disinfect; disinfection by the inspector; and the cost thereof in detail. If the cost is not paid within five days
from the completion of the disinfecting, the inspector shall file with
the auditor of the county in which the premises are situated two
verified copies of the above record, and a claim of lien against the
premises for the amount of the costs and therein refer to the record,
which the auditor shall record as other lien claims. The auditor shall
charge the same fees as are charged for filing and recording other
liens. [1961 c 11 § 15.08.130. Prior: 1927 c 311 § 5, part; 1921 c
141 § 5, part; 1915 c 166 § 14, part; RRS § 2852, part.]

RCW 15.08.140 Hearing on costs—Notice—Service. The county
auditor shall forthwith issue warrants in payment of the labor
employed in the work, and thereupon the county shall be subrogated to
all rights of the laborers so paid. He or she shall fix the day for
hearing on the record before the county commissioners, which shall be
not less than twenty days from the date of filing. He or she shall
prepare a notice directed to the owner or reputed owner of the
premises of the filing of the record and claim and the hearing
thereon, the time and place of the hearing and the amount of the
claim. The sheriff shall serve the notice in the manner provided for
service of the notice to disinfect, and file with the auditor before
the hearing, his or her return of service and the amount of his or her
fees, which shall be the same as for service of summons in civil
proceedings. [2010 c 8 § 6011; 1961 c 11 § 15.08.140. Prior: 1927 c
311 § 5, part; 1921 c 141 § 5, part; 1915 c 166 § 14, part; RRS §
2852, part.]

RCW 15.08.150 Payment and release—Order on amount—Priority of
lien. If before or at the hearing the amount of the claim and the
auditor's and sheriff's fees are paid to the county treasurer, he or
she shall deliver to the auditor a duplicate receipt of the payment
and the auditor shall cancel the lien and notify the county
commissioners thereof. The treasurer shall pay the funds to the
persons entitled thereto as appears from the records in the auditor's
office.

If payment is not made, the auditor shall present to the board of
county commissioners a verified copy of the record and claim, which
shall be accepted in any proceeding as prima facie evidence of the
truth of the contents thereof. The board shall receive and consider
the record and claim and all sworn testimony offered, and shall enter
an order fixing the amount of the claim and costs, and direct the
amount paid from the current expense fund, and the auditor shall draw
warrants therefor. The auditor shall record the order in his or her
office as other lien claims and it shall be a lien against the
premises in favor of the county, and shall bear interest at six
percent per year from the date of the order. [2010 c 8 § 6012; 1961 c
11 § 15.08.150. Prior: 1927 c 311 § 5, part; 1921 c 141 § 5, part;
1915 c 166 § 14, part; RRS § 2852, part.]

RCW 15.08.160 Payment date—Cancellation of lien. The lien and
interest may be paid on or before the first Monday in October
following the entry of the order, upon presenting to the treasurer, a
statement from the auditor showing the amount due. Upon payment the
treasurer shall stamp the statement and file it in his or her records,
and shall issue a receipt to the person making the payment, showing payment and shall deliver a duplicate to the auditor, who shall then cancel the lien. [2010 c 8 § 6013; 1961 c 11 § 15.08.160. Prior: 1927 c 311 § 5, part; 1921 c 141 § 5, part; 1915 c 166 § 14, part; RRS § 2852, part.]

**RCW 15.08.170  Failure to pay—Conversion into taxes—Use.** If the lien and interest are not paid on or before such first Monday in October the commissioners, when levying taxes for the ensuing year, shall also levy on the premises covered by the lien, a tax for the amount of the lien and interest, together with a penalty of six percent, which tax shall be collected as other taxes for current expenses. The auditor shall then cancel the lien and note thereon that the amount thereof has been charged against the premises as taxes.

The tax shall be credited to the current expense fund and used to defray the expense of horticultural inspection and disinfection in the county, whether or not such expenditure has been included in the estimates made in the current county budget. [1961 c 11 § 15.08.170. Prior: 1927 c 311 § 5, part; 1921 c 141 § 5, part; 1915 c 166 § 14, part; RRS § 2852, part.]

**RCW 15.08.180  Inspection board—Creation—Duties—Powers.** If a horticultural inspector finds premises or property infected, he or she shall make a written report thereof to the inspector-at-large in his or her district stating the disease or infestation found, the estimated extent thereof, and whether in his or her opinion it is or will become a nuisance. Upon receipt of the report the inspector-at-large shall appoint a person residing within three miles of the said premises or property and who is a grower of horticultural products which could be infected from said premises or property, and who, with the inspector-at-large or someone delegated by him or her from his or her department, shall appoint a third person likewise a grower of agricultural products which could be so infected. Said three persons shall constitute an inspection board whose duty shall be to forthwith examine the infested premises or property so as to determine whether same or any part thereof is infested with any pest or disease named in RCW 15.08.010.

The board members shall have the same power of entry and inspection as the director, supervisor, or horticultural inspector and shall be compensated at the rate of four dollars per day to be paid from the county current expense budget for horticulture. [2010 c 8 § 6014; 1961 c 11 § 15.08.180. Prior: (i) 1941 c 20 § 5; 1915 c 166 § 6; Rem. Supp. 1941 § 2849-1e. (ii) 1941 c 20 § 7, part; Rem. Supp. 1941 § 2849-1g, part.]

**RCW 15.08.190  Report of inspection—Nuisance abatement.** Said board shall make a written report to the inspector-at-large of its findings, signed under oath by a majority of its members and stating:

1. Whether said premises or a part thereof are infested,
2. If infested, the nature and extent of infestation, and
3. Whether the infestation constitutes a nuisance. If the report shows the premises infested and constituting a nuisance, it and the findings of the inspector, shall be transmitted forthwith to the
prosecuting attorney of the county. Within five days the prosecuting attorney shall file in the superior court a petition, signed and verified by him or her, describing the premises or property, giving the names of the owners, encumbrancers and other persons interested therein, as ascertained from the county records, containing a recital of the proceedings taken under RCW 15.08.050, 15.08.060, 15.08.070, 15.08.080, 15.08.090, and 15.08.180, and praying for an order declaring the premises or property to be a nuisance. Said report of the inspection board shall be attached to the petition as an exhibit and made a part thereof.  

RCW 15.08.200 Notice of hearing—Service—Adjournments. A notice containing a description of the premises, stating the objects and purposes of the petition and the time and place of presentation of the petition to the court, shall be served upon every person named as interested in the premises at least five days prior to the time of presentation. Service of the notice shall be as nearly as possible in the manner provided by law for service of summons in a civil action, except that if service is had by publication the period of publication shall be two weekly publications in a newspaper published or of general circulation in the county, and the service shall be deemed completed on the expiration of fifteen days after the date of the first publication.

Proof of service may be made by affidavit of the person serving or publishing the notice and shall be filed with the clerk of the court on or before the time of presentation of the petition.

On application of any party or its own motion the court may adjourn the hearing from time to time, and may order new or further notice to be given any person whose interest may be affected.  

RCW 15.08.210 Order of abatement. At the hearing there must be competent proof that all parties interested in the premises or property have been duly served with said notice, and that the procedure prescribed in RCW 15.08.050, 15.08.060, 15.08.070, 15.08.080, 15.08.090, and 15.08.180 has been duly followed. The report of the inspection board shall be prima facie evidence that the premises are infested and constitute a nuisance. If there is no showing that said board acted in a capricious, arbitrary or unfair manner, the court shall accept the recommendation of said board and forthwith decree the plants, produce or property on the premises to constitute a nuisance and order the inspector-at-large of the district and the county commissioners to destroy the same, or abate the nuisance in such other manner as the court may direct.

The costs of destruction or abatement, and of the proceedings shall be taxed against the defendants therein.  

[ 9 ]
**RCW 15.08.220** Appeals—Bond for damages. An appeal may be taken from the decree by filing notice thereof not later than ten days after issuance of the decree. The appellant shall be required to file an appeal bond of not less than one thousand dollars and sufficient in amount to cover possible damages to neighboring properties due to delay in carrying out the decree. [1961 c 11 § 15.08.220. Prior: 1941 c 20 §§ 11, 12; Rem. Supp. 1941 §§ 2849-2b, 2849-2c.]

**RCW 15.08.230** Disinfection of public properties. The director may require the governing body of counties, cities, towns and irrigation and school districts or other political subdivisions of the state to disinfect or destroy all infected trees, shrubs, or other nursery stock growing upon public property within their respective jurisdictions, or the director may disinfect or destroy such infected trees, shrubs, or other nursery stock. [1981 c 296 § 6; 1961 c 11 § 15.08.230. Prior: 1915 c 166 § 19; RRS § 2857.]

Severability—1981 c 296: See note following RCW 15.08.010.

**RCW 15.08.240** Dumping infected products, containers, prohibited. It shall be unlawful for a property owner or lessee to permit the piling or dumping, or for a person to pile or dump, any infected product on any property or to pile or dump infected containers where the dumping of the infected products or containers might constitute a source of infestation to horticultural products. [1961 c 11 § 15.08.240. Prior: 1943 c 150 § 6; 1941 c 20 § 14; Rem. Supp. 1943 § 2849-2e.]

**RCW 15.08.250** Host-free districts—Director's duties. Whenever the director determines that a particular pest cannot be eradicated or effectively controlled by ordinary means, or that it is impractical to eradicate or control it without the destruction in whole or in part of uninfected host plants, he or she may issue a proclamation setting out the host-free period or host-free district, or both, describing the host plant and the district wherein planting, growing, cultivating, or maintenance in any manner of any plants or products capable of continuing the particular pests is prohibited during a specified period of time and until the menace therefrom no longer exists. [2010 c 8 § 6016; 1961 c 11 § 15.08.250. Prior: 1941 c 20 § 13; Rem. Supp. 1941 § 2849-2d.]

**RCW 15.08.260** Horticultural tax. At the time of making the regular annual tax levy the board of county commissioners of each county shall include a tax, to be known as the "horticultural tax," upon the taxable property of the county in an amount sufficient to meet the expense of inspecting and disinfecting nursery stock, fruits, vegetables, horticultural or agricultural products, and horticultural premises under the provisions of this title. Said tax shall be levied and collected in the same manner as are general taxes and when collected shall be placed in the county current expense fund. [1961 c 11 § 15.08.260. Prior: 1919 c 195 § 3, part; 1915 c 166 § 13, part; RRS § 2851, part.]
RCW 15.08.270  **Basis for estimating the tax.**  In estimating the amount to be levied for said horticultural tax the board shall take into consideration the expense of such inspection and disinfection for the ensuing year, and the amount which will be collected under the provisions of this chapter on properties disinfected.  [1961 c 11 § 15.08.270. Prior: 1919 c 195 § 3, part; 1915 c 166 § 13, part; RRS § 2851, part.]