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CRUISING PLANTS

The cruise ship *Mikhail Sholokhov* visited fort Vila, Vanuatu, for the first time on 30 December 1992. On arrival, it reported 'Nil' plants on board, however quarantine staff counted nine potted plants in the bar and a display of live plants running the entire length of the restaurant area.

Most potted plants were ornamental palms and several of these had infestations of helmet scale, *Saissetia coffeae*. One plant appeared to have been killed by the scale infestation. Other plants included potted lilies with severe mite infestations. Both palms and lilies are prohibited plants in Vanuatu.

Vanuatu Principal Plant Protection Officer, Andy Whitwell, reports that the ship's agents have been instructed not to carry prohibited plants and that any plants kept on board must be maintained in a healthy condition free of pests.

Countries are reminded that special care is needed when clearing tourist vessels as problems with plants on board are common. What was so special in this case was that **prohibited plants** were present, many of them in an obviously unhealthy condition. It is recommended that all countries follow Vanuatu's example and require any plants on board to be healthy and of non-prohibited types. Many tourist vessels manage very well using only artificial plants.

