

AI Overview

In military intelligence and counterintelligence, a **plant** refers to a person secretly placed within an organization, facility, or group to gather information, influence activities, or act as a spy. Unlike a "sleeper agent" who may live in a location for years before being activated, a plant is typically inserted into a specific environment to exploit its proximity to targets or sensitive information. Spyscape +4

Here is a breakdown of what a "plant" entails:

Key Aspects of a Plant

- Definition:** An individual who appears to be part of the regular staff or environment but is actually working under the direction of an intelligence agency to obtain information.
- Purpose:** To gain "access" or "proximity" to targets, personnel, or classified, sensitive information.
- Types of Agents (Contextualized):**
 - Facilities Agent:** A plant specifically placed to gain access to buildings (e.g., garages, offices) for staging operations or gathering intelligence.
 - Confusion Agent:** A plant sent to disrupt or confuse the intelligence apparatus of another country.
- Counterintelligence Focus:** In counterintelligence, identifying a plant involves identifying someone who has successfully gained access to a secure or sensitive area to conduct espionage. Wikipedia +4

Wisdom begins with the definition of terms - ODNI

15 Aug 2007 — Access. In counterintelligence and intelligence use: 1) ...

DNI.gov

DoD-CI-Definitions - Public Intelligence



9 Jun 2014 — An individual who acts under the direction...

Public Intelligence

Espionage - Wikipedia




Less common or lesser known forms of agent include: *...


Wikipedia

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Distinctions

- **Plant vs. Agent:** While all plants are agents, not all agents are plants. A "plant" specifically emphasizes the action of being "placed" or embedded in a target environment.
- **Backstop:** To make a plant believable, they are often given a "backstop"—a false background supported by documentation or oral stories to make their presence legitimate.  CIA (.gov) +1

Emerging Context

In a non-human, technical context, the term has also been used by DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) to describe "**Advanced Plant Technologies**" (APT), which are genetically engineered plants designed to act as a network of environmental sensors to monitor for chemical, biological, or nuclear threats.  ScienceAlert

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CDSE

<https://www.cdse.edu> > glossary > CI-glossary


Counterintelligence Glossary

PDF 

Defense **Intelligence** Agency (DIA): A DOD agency and a member of the U.S. **Intelligence** Community responsible for providing timely, objective, and cogent **military** ... [Read more](#)

21 pages

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