



1 October 2012

***Chalara fraxinea* in ash trees in Great Britain**

This e-alert is in response to a new threat to tree health which has appeared in Great Britain, and to seek your support in tackling it. This new threat is the highly destructive Chalara dieback of ash trees, caused by the *Chalara fraxinea* fungus.

Background

Chalara fraxinea (*C. fraxinea*) has caused widespread damage to ash tree populations in continental Europe, especially common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), including ornamental varieties. *Fraxinus angustifolia* is also susceptible. Chalara dieback of ash is particularly destructive of young ash plants, killing them within one growing season of symptoms becoming visible. Older trees can survive initial attacks, but tend to succumb eventually after several seasons of infection

It was unknown in Great Britain until recently, but the first cases were confirmed in a nursery in Buckinghamshire early in 2012, on ash plants which had been imported from The Netherlands. Our colleagues in Fera are working to trace forward plants which

had already been sold on to retail customers from the infected nursery consignments.

We are treating *C. fraxinea* as a 'quarantine' plant pathogen, which means that we may use emergency powers to contain or eradicate it when it is found. This is being done in the form of Statutory Plant Health Notices which we serve on affected owners requiring them to remove and destroy affected plants by burning or deep burial on site. Equivalent measures are being taken on land managed by the Forestry Commission. This is the only available treatment.

How you can help

1. Be vigilant – Chalara dieback could appear in ash trees anywhere in Britain, especially where young trees imported from continental Europe have been planted. Early action is essential if we are to eradicate this disease from Britain before it becomes established.

We therefore urge you to inspect frequently any ash trees in your care, and especially any

which have been planted during the past five or so years. Make yourself familiar with the symptoms of Chalara dieback from the material on our [website](#). There are other causes of ash dieback, so it is important to distinguish them from Chalara, however, if in doubt, report it.



Chalara dieback of ash - browning of ash leaf tip caused by *Chalara fraxinea* fungus



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2. Report it - Report suspicious symptoms to one of the following:

Forest Research Tree Health Diagnostic and Advisory Service

Tel: 01420 23000

Email:
ddas.ah@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Forestry Commission Plant Health Service

Tel: 0131 314 6414

Email:
plant.health@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Fera Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate

Tel: 01904 465625

Email:
planthealth.info@fera.gsi.gov.uk

3. Buy with care – Be careful when buying plants to buy only from reputable suppliers, and specify disease-free stock. A list of countries where *C. fraxinea* is known to be present is available in the Questions and Answers document on our [website](#).

4. Be diligent - Practise good plant hygiene and biosecurity in your own gardens and wood-

lands etc to prevent accidental spread of plant diseases. See our '[Biosecurity Guidance](#)' document for advice on basic hygiene and biosecurity measures you can take.

5. Keep up to date – Check our [website](#) regularly for updates on developments. Follow our [Tree Pest News](#) account on Twitter to receive rapid intelligence of new developments, delivered by text or email.

(Information about a wide range of other tree pests and diseases can be accessed via www.forestry.gov.uk/pestsanddiseases)

Plant Health Notices

Owners of any ash plants found to be infected will be served Plant Health Notices requiring them to destroy the plants, either by burning or deep burial on site

Compensation

Unfortunately we are unable to offer any compensation for plants destroyed in order to comply with a Plant Health Notice.

Further information

As well as our dedicated [web pages](#) about *C. fraxinea*, there is further information on the [EPPO website](#).

Should you need any further help or information, please contact the woodland officer for your area (look under 'Area' offices for England and Wales, and 'Conservancy' offices in Scotland, in the '[Contact Us](#)' area of our website) or contact our Plant Health Service at:

Plant Health Service
Forestry Commission
Silvan House
231 Corstorphine Road
Edinburgh
EH12 7AT

Tel: 0131 314 6214

Email:
plant.health@forestry.gsi.gov.uk