

**Report on the 2nd Forestry Commission Woodland
Survey 2006 to Assess the Level of Incidence of *Phytophthora ramorum* and
Phytophthora kernoviae in Targeted Woodlands in Devon**

**Forestry Commission
Plant Health
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Summary

In October and November 2006, the Forestry Commission (FC) undertook a second survey in Devon. This survey, on a much greatly reduced scale compared to the survey carried out in August and September, targeted a number of woodlands which were associated with plant movement, heritage gardens and regular recreational activity, and where movement through these woods had the potential to transmit *Phytophthora ramorum* and/or *P. kernoviae*. A total of **nine** woodlands which fulfilled the criteria above, which were in admixture with rhododendron and/or *Vaccinium*, were intensively surveyed. Samples were analysed from **two** sites with symptomatic plants, but no positives were found. At **five** of the sites, water baits were used but they also proved to be negative

Background

Phytophthora ramorum is a fungus-like pathogen, which has been identified as the causal agent for the condition known in the USA as Sudden Oak Death. The first evidence of it in Britain was found during April 2002 on a viburnum but since then it has been found mainly on rhododendrons in nurseries and garden centres. In November 2003 the first infected tree (*Quercus falcata*) was confirmed in Sussex. Further infections were subsequently confirmed on trees in historic gardens in Cornwall. Rhododendrons were present on all of these sites. In 2004 a new and potentially more damaging pathogen, *P. kernoviae*¹ was found in Cornwall and South Wales and in a nursery in Cheshire with *R. ponticum* again the principal host. This has led to a number of surveys being carried out by the Forestry Commission, details of which can be found at www.forestry.gov.uk/planthealth

Objective of the Survey

This survey targeted sites associated with plant movement, heritage gardens and regular recreational activity, and where movement through these areas had the potential to transmit the diseases.

Sampling Protocol & Timetable

This survey was carried out by the FC's Technical Services Unit (TSU) based in Exeter. The FC would normally operate independently of PHSI, but as *P. ramorum* had been found so close to the Devon border, it was agreed that the two organisations would work closely together and combine the results of their respective surveys so that a clearer picture of the spread of the pathogens in Devon and Cornwall could be established. Of the sites chosen for inspection, **five** were along the south coast of the county, **three** were inland sites in mid-Devon, and **one** was in the north of the county. Samples collected were sent to CSL by the PHSI team based at Polwhele, Truro.

¹ Prior to formal naming, *Phytophthora kernoviae* was referred to both as *P. kernoivii* and *P. Taxon C*

Data Summary

No of woods surveyed	No of Sites sampled with LFD's	No of sites showing positives with LFD	No of sites from which samples sent to CSL	No of samples sent to CSL	No of sites where water baits put down
9	2	2	2	5	5

* = Lateral Flow Devices

All samples, including water baits, sent to CSL for analysis were found to be negative.

Conclusion

This was a targeted and intensive survey with only 9 sites inspected and while there were no positive findings, it only provides us with a snapshot of the situation and does not prove that the county is free of the pathogens.

Next Steps

A meeting is scheduled for mid-March and the subject of further intensive and targeted surveys in Devon during 2007, similar to this one, will be discussed.

Acknowledgement

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