

Armillaria killing on restock sites

Armillaria has been found causing death of young conifers on upland restock sites in Scotland. Diseased trees, which often occur in a group, typically show needle yellowing and stem resinosis before dying. Removal of the outer bark at the stem base may reveal white mycelial sheets (right) within the bark, or between the bark and the wood, confirming the presence of *Armillaria*.



Chrysomyxa rust on Norway Spruce

A rust fungus, *Chrysomyxa rhododendri*, was identified causing yellowing of needles on Norway spruce in western Scotland. This fairly uncommon fungus infects current needles in early summer, forming yellow bands or blotches. By late summer, orange pustules develop on needles (left), producing spores which then infect and overwinter on Rhododendron, its alternate host.

Poor health of beech

There have been several reports this year of poor health of beech in Scotland. Affected trees have a range of symptoms including crown thinning, dieback, and weeping stem lesions (right). It is thought that some of these symptoms are directly due to the effects of drought in 2003. In a few cases, drought may have increased the susceptibility of individual trees to beech bark disease and *Armillaria*.



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Tar spot of sycamore

Tar spot on sycamore has been widespread. Leaves have striking, shiny black spots and are shed slightly earlier than usual. Infections are caused by the fungus *Rhytisma acerinum*, which overwinters on leaves shed in autumn. In some areas, a heavy aphid attack earlier in the year coupled with tar spot has led to complete defoliation of some sycamores, but even badly affected trees do recover.



Phytophthora disease of alder

Alders with sparse, yellowing foliage and dieback (far left) may be suffering from *Phytophthora* disease. Tarry spots or a rusty exudate on the lower part of the stem (near left) confirm the diagnosis. This new disease, first seen in England in 1993, is now widespread on many river systems in southern England and Wales. Coppicing may help to regenerate severely diseased trees.

Dutch elm disease

Dutch elm disease (*Ophiostoma novo-ulmi*) is highly visible at present. Infected trees have yellow-brown leaves and curled shoot tips (right). The disease is common if there is plenty of breeding material for the beetles which spread the disease. Once the larger elms with thick bark needed for breeding die, beetle numbers fall, and the disease incidence declines.



If you see any of these diseases in your area, we would be interested to know.

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