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Chalara fraxinea – dieback of ash Advisory Note

The Forestry Commission and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are advising owners to extend their vigilance to ash trees planted up to 20 years ago as a part of work to develop further our understanding of the impact of the disease on ash of this age. Large quantities of ash were imported from parts of continental Europe where the disease had been present before 2007 and this could mean that the disease was present on a very small proportion of plants imported from the continent at least 10 years ago.

Symptoms

The symptoms to look for are very similar to those for younger trees, but trees in the 6-20 age range will have grown above head height, making it more difficult to identify leaf symptoms. However, bark lesions, often diamond shaped and centred on side branches, will usually be visible, and will be larger on thicker stems (trunks). The crowns of infected trees can show evidence of dying back and have fewer leaves than those of healthy trees. There is also a greater likelihood of finding the blackened rachis, or leaf stalks, on the ground with the tiny, white, mushroom-like fruiting bodies on them.



Fruiting bodies on blackened fallen leaf stalks

Following leaf wilt the blackened rachis are also likely to be found remaining attached to twigs. A picture guide and printable guide are available in the symptoms section of www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara, along with further information on Chalara.

What you should do?

Suspected sites anywhere in Great Britain can be reported via the Forestry Commission's Tree Alert app or on-line reporting form at www.forestry.gov.uk/treelert, or by calling the Defra hotline on 08459 33 55 77. Respondents are asked to enter the code '6/20' in the 'Additional notes' field of the app or online reporting form or to mention this when reporting through the hotline. This will help the Commission's analysts to quickly identify the relevant reports.

There is no requirement to do anything else except in the unlikely event we serve a Statutory Plant



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Crown dieback
in infected tree

Health Notice. Owners may destroy the plants by burning or burial on site if they wish – they must not be moved off the site, see our advice on [removal and disposal of infected trees](#). For sites with an active grant scheme, or where you may wish to apply for grant, see the section on 'grant aid'.

What we will do with the information

At a local level, the information will be useful for landowners and

woodland managers as they adapt to the presence of Chalara. The Forestry Commission will use this information to inform our understanding of the disease both in terms of current prevalence and, for example, in allowing scientists to improve predictive models. This will ensure the best evidence is available to guide future Government policy and management options. The Government wishes to avoid statutory action if possible.

Grant aid

Any concern over the death of trees on sites currently within an active grant or farm woodland scheme should also be reported to the office administering the scheme www.forestry.gov.uk/england-areas.

For sites planted under the English Woodland Grant Scheme and now subject to Chalara dieback, support is available for the replanting of alternate species and removal of diseased ash trees (high and medium counties only). See [Operations Note 31](#) for full details. **It is essential that work does not commence before an application for grant is approved.** It is not possible to pay grant aid for work started before approval.

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