

Introduction only

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The Health of Non-Woodland Trees in England in 2003

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Summary

Reports of pests, diseases and disorders of trees received in 2003 are reviewed. The data were collated from two sources; from advisory queries processed at the Forestry Commission's two research centres in Surrey and Midlothian, and records received through the Condition Survey of Non-Woodland Amenity Trees. This survey, sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, provides a quantitative basis for monitoring year on year changes in tree condition. Notable occurrences in 2003 were the extremely hot summer, particularly in the south east of England, the continuing expansion of the range of the horse chestnut leaf miner, *Cameraria ohridella* and further plant infections with *Phytophthora ramorum*.

Introduction

1. In 1993 Forest Research, an Agency of the Forestry Commission, set up the "Non-Woodland Amenity Tree Health Monitoring Scheme" on behalf of the Department of the Environment (now the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister). This project has changed in emphasis slightly over the years, and is now the "Condition Survey of Non-Woodland Trees" reflecting a more holistic approach to the overall condition of trees. Individual trees are monitored annually at a number of plots by volunteers for overall indicators of health (e.g. crown density), and for various specific kinds of damage. Some types of damage, which usually require specialist diagnosis, are not included in the assessments by volunteers, but are recorded in advisory casebook data from Forest Research.
2. The trees in the survey are chosen from a range of genera common across the 95 plots active in 2003 (see Appendix 1 for tree list and Appendix 2 for an example of the assessment form). At each plot, a minimum of 30 trees, representing at least six of the genera, are examined. A range of tree pests and diseases and general indications of tree condition are assessed by volunteers, in most cases using a simple scoring system running from 0, indicating no symptoms, to 3, the presence of severe symptoms. Appendix 3 contains data summaries for 2003.
3. In addition to these 'volunteer' plots, crown densities of oak (*Quercus robur* and *Q. petraea*) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) are monitored by Forest Research Technical Support officers in a set of separate plots across England. These provide an amenity tree comparison with the Forest Condition Survey conducted in the UK by Forest Research as part of a wider European project. The scoring system used to assess crown density is a

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simplified version of that used in the Forest Condition Survey: crown transparency of chosen trees is estimated in 5% classes by reference to a standard set of photographs of 'ideal' trees (Innes, 1990, see also Hendry *et al.*, 2004), and can be used to provide an index of tree condition.

4. This note is a summary of the reports received in 2003 from 68 plots, augmented by information from sources including the Disease Diagnostic and Advisory Services (DDAS)² of Forest Research. The latter information drew upon advisory casebook data from woodland as well as non-woodland trees. Some of the tree problems covered in these reports have been described in Tree Damage Alerts (TDAs) and these are listed at the end of this Note.

²DDAS, Tree Health Division, Forest Research, Farnham, Surrey, Tel 01420 23000