

Chalara fraxinea – Chalara dieback of ash in Great Britain

Information and advice

1. Be vigilant – Chalara dieback of ash 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 have not found any evidence of Chalara dieback in ash trees outside nurseries and recent plantings, that is, we have not found any evidence that it has spread from new plantings into longer-established woodlands and hedgerows etc in the wider natural environment, and this gives cause for hope that it is not too late.

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.



Developing lesion centered on a dead side shoot

2. Report it - Report suspicious symptoms to:

Forestry Commission England Grants and Regulations Report It line

T: 0117 372 1070

E: grnationalteam@forestry.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 woodlands 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 our [pests and diseases webpage](#).)

Rapid Pest Risk Analysis

Views are invited on a Rapid Pest Risk Assessment for *C. fraxinea*. The risk assessment has been drafted by plant disease scientists at the Forestry Commission's Forest Research agency. It assesses the risks to the United Kingdom's ash trees, the feasibility and practicality of eradicating the outbreaks which have been found, and measures to prevent more outbreaks occurring.

The Forestry Commission and the Food & Environment Research Agency (Fera) are now inviting comments and suggestions on the assessment, and on options for a control strategy. If an eradication strategy is adopted, the risk assessment will be used as evidence to support a case for national legislation to strengthen the UK's protection from accidental introductions of *C. fraxinea*. Information on the consultation can be found on their [website](#).

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. All ash plants in a new-planting site will require to be destroyed, regardless of whether some do not have symptoms. This is because experience with other plant diseases shows that we must presume that asymptomatic plants in close proximity to symptomatic plants are almost certainly infected, but are not yet showing symptoms. However, we hope that if all parties act quickly now, few people will be affected by these measures.

Compensation

Unfortunately we are unable to offer any compensation for plants destroyed in order to comply with a Plant Health Notice. It is felt that the available resources are best used for surveillance and eradication work.

Plants are therefore purchased and planted at buyers' risk, and any questions about recompense would be between the customer and supplier of the plants involved. However, we hope that few people will be put in this position if all parties move quickly now to tackle this disease.

Timber

The implications for growers of ash for the timber trade would be significant if the disease were to become established in Britain. The timber in infected trees might still be usable for some purposes. However, should it get to the stage where it is infecting mature timber trees, biosecurity measures similar to those applying to larch trees infected with *Phytophthora ramorum* would be required to ensure that the disease is not spread further by timber movement. Again, however, we hope that rapid action now by all parties will avert this scenario.

Further information

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

For 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 Chalara helpline:

08459 33 55 77 (open 8am–6pm every day)

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