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22 October 2012

Dear Sir or Madam

Chalara fraxinea* – Chalara dieback of ash in Great Britain*Action:** if in the light of reading this letter you wish to:

- Discuss a variation in your grant contract to plant alternative species, or the options for felling licence conditions involving ash - then contact your Area team;
www.forestry.gov.uk/england-areas

Yorkshire & North East	01904 448778	East & East Midlands	01842 815544
North West & West Midlands	01524 565800	South East & London	01483 326200
South West	01626 890666		

- See images of symptoms - please see the link to the practical pictorial guide produced by our Forest Research Agency at www.forestry.gov.uk/england-chalara
- Report suspicious symptoms – telephone 0117 372 1070 or email us at grnationalteam@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.

Please note: All information and links included in this letter and annex are available on the Forestry Commission website. Due to the rapidly changing circumstances the requirements for disease management may change. Please monitor this web site for the latest information.
www.forestry.gov.uk/england-chalara

We are writing to raise your awareness of a new threat to tree health, the highly destructive Chalara dieback of ash trees, caused by the *Chalara fraxinea* fungus. It is particularly important that you are aware of this disease if you, or any of your clients, intend to plant ash, or have already done so within the last five years, under a Forestry Commission related grant or in relation to a conditional Felling Licence. Chalara dieback of ash (*C. fraxinea*) has caused widespread death in ash trees across continental Europe, especially in common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), including its 'Pendula' ornamental variety. *Fraxinus angustifolia* is also susceptible. Chalara dieback of ash is particularly destructive of young ash plants, killing them within one growing season of symptoms becoming visible. Older trees can survive initial attacks, but tend to succumb eventually after several seasons of infection.

Until recently this disease was unknown in Great Britain, but the first cases were confirmed in the nursery trade in England in 2012, then in recent plantings of young ash trees in

Leicestershire and Scotland. It is most likely that the fungus entered Britain on young ash plants imported from nurseries in continental Europe.

We are treating *C. fraxinea* as a 'quarantine' plant pathogen, which means that we can take legally enforceable action to contain or eradicate the fungus when it is found. This is being done by using Statutory Plant Health Notices which we serve on site owners. The Notice requires the owner of the land to remove and destroy affected plants by burning or deep burial on site. Equivalent measures will be taken on land managed by the Forestry Commission.

If you intend planting ash, or have already done so, under a Forestry Commission related planting scheme or under the terms of a Conditional Felling Licence, then you should give careful consideration to the possibility that you could, unknowingly, have been, or might be, supplied with *C. fraxinea* infected trees. This could lead to widespread death of ash in your planting project and the need for additional expense in replacing the dead trees and potentially the reclaim of the planting grant.

Forestry Commission England
October 2012

See Annex for further information.