Animal & Plant Health Agency

Plant Passporting Update No. 54

June 2025

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UK/EU Summit and plant movements from GB to NI

Following the UK/EU Summit on 19 May the Government is taking forward a new strategic partnership with the EU that will deliver greater prosperity and security for Northern Ireland and the UK as a whole. Once an SPS Agreement has been implemented, there will be opportunities to further smooth trade within the UK Internal Market System.

When these new arrangements come into effect there will be:

- No SPS paperwork to move plants and plant products to NI
- No identity or physical checks on goods to NI
- No need for Northern Ireland plant health labels
- An end to ‘high risk plants’ being prohibited from moving GB to NI.

Achieving such benefits relies on the UK being a reliable partner which delivers on its existing commitments. To that end, we must implement the arrangements for the Windsor Framework in a faithful way.

What businesses must to do now: Continue to use existing schemes to move plants, seeds, and used agricultural machinery from GB to NI:

- Use a **Northern Ireland plant health label (NIPHL)** if goods stay in NI.
- Use a **phytosanitary certificate** if goods are not staying in NI.
- **Seed potatoes** must be moved using a NIPHL only.

For more details on the agreement, please read the UK-EU Summit - Explainer on GOV.UK.

Increase in Opogona sacchari findings

There has been an increase in findings of *Opogona sacchari* (Banana moth) by APHA in plants traded, such as Yucca and Dracaena. If you issue UK plant passports for susceptible genera, you must also conduct thorough visual inspections for this pest.

Opogona sacchari is a pest of the tropics, but protected crops/plants are susceptible to outbreaks of the pest which is difficult to control and eradicate. More information is available in the plant pest factsheet.

Opogona sacchari has a wide host plant range from many indoor plants to semi protected ornamentals including Yucca, Dracaena, Musa, Bougainvillea, Ficus, Palmae and cacti.

The adult moth is nocturnal, yellowish-brown, approximately 11mm long with long antennae that point forward when the insect is at rest. The caterpillars are up to 2-3cm long, white with reddish-brown heads.

Caterpillars cause damage by burrowing into stems and tubers (occasionally petioles or leaves) of woody or fleshy plants. Their tunnelling activity can eventually lead to wilting foliage or complete collapse of the plant; bore-holes and frass may also be visible.

Opogona sacchari is notifiable and regulated under the UK plant passporting requirements and as such traders authorised to issue plant passports must notify their inspector of its presence. Alternatively, please report a quarantine plant pest or disease.


Opogona sacchari (OPOGSC) - https://gd.eppo.int

Photo above: *Opogona sacchari* damage on a Yucca, courtesy of the Plant Protection Service, Wageningen.

Photo below: *Opogona sacchari* damage on a pot plant, courtesy of Znamirowska Agata.

Oak processionary moth (OPM)

The Forestry Commission team leading on Oak processionary moth (OPM) wrote to stakeholders in an update that on the 31 March OPM caterpillars hatched from one of the OPM egg plaques kept under control conditions by the City of London.

When the caterpillars emerge, they can survive for 2-3 weeks in a semi-hibernation state, a torpor, if there are not enough leaves for them to eat at that time.

If your business trades or moves oak plants, please be aware of movement controls to help prevent trade dispersing OPM on trade plants, see the March edition Plant-Passporting-Update-No53 for more details.

More information and support is available on the OPM website, which has guidance on surveillance, identification and management of OPM. There is also information on the restrictions on oak trade and movement.

The Forestry Commission has a suite of communication resources which you are welcome to use including PDF versions of posters, leaflets and banners, all are available on the OPM Resource Hub.

If you find OPM please send reports and sightings to Tree Alert or report a quarantine plant pest or disease.

Legislation for spring 2025 - reminder

The GB Plant Health Service have introduced legislation that will come into force from **30 May 2025**. Risk assessments are a dynamic process, so all commodities remain under continuous review.

Changes to enhance our biosecurity include:

- Reclassifying *Neodiprion abietis*, known as the balsam fir sawfly, as a quarantine pest.
- Reclassifying *Pseudomonas avellanae*, a bacterial pathogen of hazel, as a quarantine pest, with specific import requirements.
- Consequential amendments to ensure that import controls apply to certain regulated commodities, as originally intended.

More details and a Q&A can be found on the plant health portal.

Reminder: Export of High-Risk Plants to the EU and Northern Ireland

Several interceptions have recently been made of prohibited high-risk plants entering Northern Ireland from Great Britain on Northern Ireland plant health labels (NIPHL), including **Jasmin, Honeysuckle and Willow**. High-risk plants listed in Annex I of EU Regulation 2018/2019 are **prohibited** from export to the European Union, including Northern Ireland, due to it operating under EU SPS rules under the Windsor Framework, pending a risk assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

You must check the list of regulated plants and not move those on the prohibited list.

The prohibition has been lifted on twenty key species of plants including some, but not all, species of oak, maple, hazel and hawthorn. Working collaboratively with industry, Defra identified over 20 further species important to trade and submitted technical dossiers for those species to the European Commission for assessment, whilst work on compiling dossiers for a further 10 species is ongoing.

A full list of dossiers submitted and approved for entry into Northern Ireland, information on how to feed into the process for identifying priority species, and links to legislation setting out import/movement conditions, can be found on the plant health portal.

Northern Ireland plant health label (NIPHL) scheme

Prohibited plants

The movement of certain species of plants for planting from Great Britain to Northern Ireland is prohibited. Please consult the following page prior to arranging movements of plants for planting to Northern Ireland. List 1 details prohibited plants for planting. Lists 2, 3 and 4 detail species requiring a growing season inspection by an APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspector before they can enter Northern Ireland from Great Britain.

Regulated plants for planting under a Northern Ireland plant health label (NIPHL) - GOV.UK

Renewals process

For the 2025-2026 season the NIPHL authorisation process will be streamlined. All clients authorised for the NIPHL scheme must apply for authorisation renewal during September 2025 using the NIPHL authorisation renewal form.

List of Authorised Distance Plant Sellers

A distance plant sale occurs when plants are sold either by mail order or by internet shop and delivered by a third party. Un-authorised distance sales have been found to include illegal goods containing pests and diseases.

In 2024, APHA carried out a review of the top 100 online plant sellers by Google search. As a result, APHA followed up with 20 businesses and authorised them to issue UK plant passports.

To support compliant (authorised) plant traders, APHA has created a voluntary list of businesses that have been authorised to issue plant passports for plants sold by distance contract. This will make it easier for UK plant buyers to tell if a plant seller is authorised and will enable businesses to demonstrate that they are reputable plant sellers.

If you are an authorised nurseries that is competing with un-authorised sales on the internet, please sign up to the list to help flush out the unauthorised sellers. Details of how to do this, as well as the current list of authorised plant sellers are available on GOV.UK. 423 businesses have signed up to the list so far!

UK interceptions of quarantine pests

You can find details of recent interceptions we've made on plants and plant material to date in 2025 Non-compliance data - UK Plant Health Information Portal (defra.gov.uk).

The data gives a good overview of current pests and diseases that could pose a threat to businesses, growers and traders.

See our latest interceptions

Seasonal pests and diseases

Help us prevent these pests and disease from entering and being spread in the UK. We have included information on various pest threats below, which you need to be aware of:

Ornamental plants

Rose Rosette virus (RRV) is a plant pathogenic virus, which was first found in Canada and the USA in the 1940s and is now found throughout most of the USA, some provinces in Canada and was introduced into West Bengal, India in 2017.

Spread of the virus is primarily via infected propagating material and the microscopic mite *Phyllocoptes fructiphilus*, although another species, *P. arcani* has recently been reported as a vector. The mite can spread passively in air currents, by crawling between plants or on equipment or clothing.

The major host of RRV is rose, with all species, including climbers, hybrid teas, floribundas, miniature and antique species and varieties, considered to be susceptible or potentially susceptible to the virus and vector.

Symptoms of RRV are highly variable but can include leaf mosaics and mottling, reddened leaves, excessive thorniness, thickened stems, witches broom, reduced flowering and malformations.

RRV is notifiable and not known to be present in the UK, please report a quarantine plant pest or disease.

Photo above: Multiple witches' broom on a RRV infected rose, courtesy of Patrick Di Bello, Oregon State University (US).

Popillia japonica, commonly known as the 'Japanese beetle', is a chafer beetle native to Japan. It is highly polyphagous and an important pest of a range of crops and woody plants, adults defoliate plants, larval stages feed on roots. The first incursion in mainland Europe occurred in autumn 2014, when large numbers of adults were detected near Milan, Italy. Adult Japanese beetles are highly polyphagous, with over 300 hosts in 79 plant families reported in the USA. If introduced to the UK, it could have an impact on many crops and fruit trees, turf and ornamental garden species and plants of environmental importance.

Adult females lay eggs near to host plants and subsequent larval stages feed on roots of nearby hosts. Due to the wide host range, many crops and fruit trees, turf and ornamental garden species, pasture and turf and plants of environmental importance to the UK could potentially be affected.

Early detection is vital for the effective control of this pest and the protection of horticulture, agriculture and the wider environment. Industry should source material carefully, and both commercial growers and gardeners may wish to monitor for its presence. Statutory action will be taken against Japanese beetle

if intercepted on imported plant material and against outbreaks on commercial plant production premises in the UK.

Popillia japonica is notifiable and not known to be present in the UK, please report a quarantine plant pest or disease.

Photo above: Adult beetle feeding on grapevine, courtesy of Japanese Research lab, USDA (US).

Forest and ornamental trees

Phytophthora lateralis is an aggressive fungal pathogen of predominantly Lawson cypress trees (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*) and some other species, with infection of the roots and lower trunk and stems, leading plants turning pale green, bronzed and to mortality of the plant. For more details see Phytophthora lateralis - Forest Research.

Findings of *P. lateralis* in trade and at traders authorised to issue plant passports, such as in nurseries or garden centres, must be reported to the relevant plant health authority. If you are based in England and Wales, report sightings to your local Plant Health and Seeds Inspector or report it via the on-line TreeAlert disease reporting tool.

Edible crops

Plum Pox Virus (PPV) is regulated under the UK plant passporting requirements and as such traders authorised to issue plant passports must notify their inspector of its presence.

Early in the growing season, PPV can cause pale-green or light-yellow chlorotic spots, bands, rings or vein clearing on leaves. Infected flowers may develop darker pink streaks on the petals. Infected fruits can show chlorotic spots, yellow rings or line patterns. Fruits may also be deformed and show internal browning of the flesh; in apricots and certain plums, the stones show pale rings. Premature fruit dropping (up to 100%) can occur in the most susceptible cultivars.

Photo above: Symptoms of Plum Pox virus on peach, courtesy of EPPO and Biologische Bundesanstalt (DE).

Photo below: Japanese plum foliage, courtesy of M. Cambra, IVIA, Moncada, Valencia (ES).

Information on the Defra plant health portal

The UK Plant Health Information Portal offers a wide range of information to everyone to use as a resource. Defra have refreshed and produced a range of new and update pest and disease information.

Contingency plans for a range of pests and diseases. Contingency plans strengthen protection against plant pests and diseases inland and includes a commitment to develop effective contingency plans and clear governance to help eradicate or minimise the impact when outbreaks occur. And the UK Plant Health Risk Register which you can download and manipulate the data to help you make risk-based decisions on plants you buy and trade onto others.

Get in touch

Always check your plants for symptoms. If you suspect disease, or have any queries, please speak to your local plant inspector or contact PHSI HQ (planthealth.info@apha.gov.uk or 0300 100 0313).

You can also get social with us:

Please contact the externalcommunications@apha.gov.uk mailbox if you no longer wish to receive these email notifications

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.