Animal & Plant Health Agency

Plant Passporting Update No. 55

August 2025

In this edition you can find information on:

Obligations on traders authorised to issue UK plant passports

As a business authorised by APHA to issue UK Plant Passports you have appointed a ‘Person Responsible’ who signs a form to say they will abide by the duties of the Persons Responsible.

As the 'Person Responsible' you have a vital role to play in protecting plant health in your business and the United Kingdom, and agree to undertake the following:

- Ensure that APHA has up to date contact details (names, addresses, telephone numbers)
- Each year before the start of the growing season, renew your Application for Authorisation through the government gateway.
- Maintain an up-to-date site plan, to be shown to the inspector so that they are clear on the distribution of plants and where to inspect.

These actions help with two important pillars in UK plant passporting, **Assurance** and **Traceability**.

Assurance:

Maintain a folder containing relevant plant health information, encouraging staff to review it on a regular basis. Ensure both yourself and staff remain aware of quarantine pests and diseases (QPD) relevant to your authorisation. Include trade updates and e-learning certificates.

Traceability:

1. Inspect all plants on arrival (Goods in check) for the presence of QPD and ensure paperwork and labelling is correct.
2. Regularly inspect all plants maintained on site for the presence of QPD.
3. Inspect all plants prior to dispatch (Goods out check) for QPD and ensure paperwork and labelling is correct.
4. Maintain records of all plant movements both to and from the authorised site including copies of relevant labels and paperwork going back a minimum of three years.
5. Where operations are to continue in your absence, delegate a deputy to assume responsibility to ensure requirements are maintained. Deputy must also complete and sign this form.
6. Immediately report any suspicious findings to your local Plant Health and Seeds Inspector (PHSI).
7. Contact your local PHSI where you are unsure as to what you should do or if you have any questions.

Further information on Plant Passports can also be found on GOV.UK.

Research into plant pest detection and reporting training needs

Horticultural and landscape businesses have a crucial role in providing early warning of potential outbreaks of notifiable pests. But research shows that developing cost-effective approaches for monitoring and detection is not easy.

The *Strengthening Plant Pest Detection and Reporting Project* is developing a new training programme to support businesses in the ornamental plant trade – and we need your help.

We would like to hear from:

- Businesses and professionals trading in ornamental trees and plants (including growers, retailers, landscapers, garden designers)
- People with responsibility for monitoring plant health or managing pests and pathogens.

By taking part in this research, you will be helping to shape:

- Online training resources
- Training programme format and content.

Activities you could participate in:

- A 30-minute interview (online or by phone, at a time to suit you)
- A group consultation (3 x 90-minute online sessions). The next ones are Monday 1 September and 15 September (repeat sessions).

All conversations are anonymous; no names will be used in the research.

This project is a joint initiative of Fera Science, Forest Research, the Yorkshire Arboretum and Defra.

Please share this with other businesses/colleagues who may not receive this email.

To find out more and take part, please contact our Forest Research Social Scientists:

Dr Bethan Stagg at: bethan.stagg@forestresearch.gov.uk

Dr Harry Marshall at: harry.marshall@forestresearch.gov.uk.

High Risk Plants to the EU

Over the last 4 years Defra worked with a group of stakeholders to submit the technical dossiers required to initiate the process of obtaining derogations from prohibitions on exports of High-Risk Plants to the EU and Northern Ireland (a full list of High-Risk Plants can be found on GOV.UK).

The UK have now obtained derogations from prohibitions on exports for 33 High Risk Plant species, subject to certain phytosanitary conditions being met. These species are: *Acer campestre, Acer palmatum, Acer platanoides, Acer pseudoplatanus, Alnus cordata, Alnus glutinosa, Alnus incana, Betula pendula, Betula pubescens, Cornus alba, Cornus sanguinea, Corylus avellana, Crataegus monogyna, Fagus sylvatica, Ligustrum delavayanum, Ligustrum ovalifolium, Ligustrum vulgare, Malus domestica, Malus sylvestris, Populus alba, Populus nigra, Populus tremula, Prunus avium, Prunus canescens, Prunus cerasus, Prunus pseudocerasus, Prunus spinosa, Quercus petraea, Quercus robur, Sorbus aucuparia, Taxus baccata Tilia cordata* and *Tilia platyphyllos*.

We have also submitted the technical dossiers for 15 further species: *Berberis thunbergia, Castanea sativa, Hamamelis mollis, Lonicera ligustrina var pileata, Lonicera ligustrina var yunnanensis, Lonicera peiclymenum, Prunus armeniaca, Prunus cerasifera, Prunus domestica, Prunus incisa, Prunus persica, Robinia pseudoacacia 'Frisia', Salix caprea, Salix cinerea,* and *Ulmus minor*. The EU is

currently reviewing these dossiers, and we anticipate that eventual derogations will be granted, subject to certain phytosanitary conditions being met. Please see the Plant Health Portal for updates on this work.

We wanted to let you know that following the announcement of the intention to negotiate the SPS Agreement with the EU, the decision has been taken to stop submitting further dossiers. This decision was taken due to a combination of factors, including length of time taken from submission to obtaining the derogations and likely involvement of key EU/EFSA personnel in SPS agreement negotiations.

Legislation for autumn 2025

The Great Britain's Plant Health Service propose to introduce new pest measures to come into force from **30 November 2025**.

Proposals are to introduce legislative changes to enhance our biosecurity. The proposed changes include:

- Reclassifying *Agrilus horni* (known as the aspen root girdler) and the fungal pathogen *Heterobasidion occidentale* as quarantine pests.
- Reclassifying *Toumeyella parvicornis* (the pine tortoise scale) as a quarantine pest with specific import requirements. Stakeholder engagement on this measure will commence shortly.
- Adding the pest *Homona magnanima* (oriental tea tortrix) to the provisional quarantine pest list.
- Expanding the import requirements for *Bursaphelenchus xylophilus* (the pinewood nematode) to reflect its expanded geographical range.

Along with several trade-facilitating changes proposed. More details and a Q&A can be found on the Plant Health Portal.

Northern Ireland plant health label (NIPHL) authorisation renewals

We are writing to inform you of upcoming changes to the renewals process for authorisation for the Northern Ireland plant health label (NIPHL) scheme.

For the 2025-2026 business year, all authorised businesses must apply for authorisation renewal by **31 September 2025**. Applications may be submitted throughout September 2025. This is a change from the current rolling application process.

Applications should be submitted annually using the online form that is available on GOV.UK.

You will be asked to provide:

- your NIPHL scheme authorisation number (if you know it)
- the trading name of your business
- the contact details of your business
- the name of the person responsible for your businesses' NIPHL scheme authorisation.

If you have any questions regarding the NIPHL scheme renewals process, please contact your local plant health and seeds inspector.

Unstable loads moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland

There have been a few instances of unstable consignments of plants and plant products arriving in Northern Ireland presenting for inspection at DAERA's inspection facilities. This presents a health and safety risk for plant health inspectors inspecting the goods.

Lorries and trailers must be loaded and presented to inspectors in a safe and accessible manner to ensure the goods can be inspected as required. Where this is not the case, consignments may have to be reloaded or may be refused entry to NI if they cannot be inspected.

For further information on moving goods from Great Britain to Northern Ireland please refer to the Export plants and plant products from Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Moving plants from Great Britain to Northern Ireland (NIPHL) guidance available on GOV.UK.

UK interceptions of quarantine pests

You can find details of recent interceptions we've made on plants and plant material to date by country, botanical name, commodity and pest, see the UKPhins Reports for more information.

The data gives an overview of current pests and diseases that could pose a threat to businesses, growers and traders. You will see in the year to date report by harmful organisms Bemisia tabaci (Tobacco whitefly), Liriomyza leafminers and Phytophthora ramorum - Forest Research (Ramorum disease) a number of times.

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

Thousand Canker disease (*Geosmithia morbida*) of walnut

The pathogen is responsible for thousand cankers disease (*Geosmithia morbida*) is spread by the North American bark beetle *Pityophthorus j*uglandis – the walnut twig borer. Both were detected in Italy in 2013, the first record for Europe.

All species of walnut can be infected, but *Juglans nigra* (black walnut) is the most severely affected.

Affected trees show wilting, branch dieback, crown thinning and cankers. Repeated feeding by beetle leads to high numbers of cankers which can girdle and kill branches. Trees can be killed 3-4 years after infestation.

There are no effective treatments.

If you suspect this disease, you must be report it 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.

Photo above: Bark removed to show cankers caused by Geosmithia morbida on the trunk of a Juglans nigra tree, courtesy of Prof. Lucio Montecchio, Universita di Padova (IT).

Forest and ornamental trees

Findings of P. austrocedri Phytophthora austrocedrae

Phytophthora austrocedri disease of juniper and cypress - Forest Research *(P. austrocedri*) is an aggressive, fungus-like pathogen which infects juniper and cypress trees (trees in the *Juniperus* and *Cupressus* genera), causing dieback and tree death.

The name was previously spelled *Phytophthora austrocedrae.*

The disease infects the bark and causes a bronze brown infected area, while the foliage will eventually also turn a bronze colour as the Juniper plant eventually dies. The disease can move around in ground water, foot ware and infected plants or trimmings.

Findings of *P. austrocedri* 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

Potato Spindle Tuber viroid (PSTVd) is a serious pathogen of potato, capsicum and tomato. Infection reduces yield and market quality.

Many countries have eradicated outbreaks, including the UK. However, the pathogen can be symptomless in many host plants and escape detection. The main hosts are potato, tomato, pepper and related ornamental plants. Infected potato plants are often stunted and produce small and misshaped tubers, but symptoms can vary depending on potato variety and growing conditions. Stunted tomato plants may yellow and stop producing fruit. Ornamental plants generally do not show signs of disease.

PSTVd is controlled under the UK plant passporting scheme. If you suspect it's presence, please notify your local Plant Health and Seeds Inspector.

Photo above: Symptoms - distortion on inoculated *Solanum lycopersicum.*

Photo below: Symptoms - elongated spindle potato tubers.

Both photos courtesy of NPPO of the Netherlands.

Grape Phylloxera (*Daktulosphaira vitifoliae*), is an insect pest of grapevines in Europe. The insect has a complex and flexible life cycle. It forms both nodule-like galls on the roots and conspicuous galls about the size of half a pea on the underside of the leaf surface. Galls are open on the upper side of the leaf. Adults are poor fliers, but movement is most likely through infested plant material and root stocks.

Grape phylloxera has only been found in some vineyards in southern England; with only the root galls being found. However recently the leaf galls have been found on suckers arising from root stocks of UK plants, it is thought that warmer summer temperatures have created more favourable conditions for this pest in the UK.

Grape phylloxera is controlled under the UK plant passporting scheme. If you suspect it's presence, please notify your local Plant Health and Seeds Inspector.

Photo above - Leaf galls on grapevine, courtesy of Biologische Bundesanstalt, Institute für Pflanzenschutz im Weinbau (DE).

Candidatus Phytoplasma pyri (Pear Decline)

Phytoplasmas are small bacterial parasites with the ability to replicate in plants and insects. Within the plant, phytoplasmas colonize the phloem. They secrete various effector proteins, which are transported within the plant and induce a wide range of physiological changes in their hosts. Phytoplasmas are transmitted by phloem feeding insect species. After ingestion by a vector insect, the phytoplasmas multiply in various insect tissues and invade the salivary gland cells from where they can be introduced into a new host plant with the insect saliva. Infectious insects keep infectivity for the rest of their life (Weintraub and Beanland, 2006; Hogenhout *et al.,* 2008; Sugio *et al.,* 2011).

The main inoculum sources for '*Ca*. P. pyri' are infectious insect vectors and infected propagation material.

Two types of decline symptoms are recognized: quick decline and slow decline or leaf curl. The degree to which decline symptoms are expressed is governed by the sensitivity of the rootstock.

Quick decline

Where the phloem at the bud union is sufficiently damaged to starve the roots during the growing season, fruits cease to develop and both fruits and leaves

wilt rapidly. This may be followed by some leaf scorching and leaf death. Trees generally die within a few weeks.

Slow decline

There is a progressive weakening of the tree, which may fluctuate in severity. Terminal growth is reduced or may cease completely. Leaves are few, small, leathery and light-green, with slightly up-rolled margins; they become abnormally red in autumn and drop prematurely. Although blossoming is heavy in the early stages of attack, later on, fewer flowers are produced, fruit set is reduced, and fruit does not attain the normal size.

Above text courtesy of EPPO (2025) *'Candidatus Phytoplasma pyri'*. EPPO datasheets on pests recommended for regulation. https://gd.eppo.int (accessed 2025-08-07).

Pear Decline is controlled under the UK plant passporting scheme. If you suspect it's presence, please notify your local Plant Health and Seeds Inspector.

Photo above - Pear Decline in September, courtesy of: Monika Riedle-Bauer. Federal College and Research Institute for Viticulture and Pomology, Klosterneuburg (AT).

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