

Pest Alert: Canker stain of plane (*Ceratocystis platani*)



Fig 1: Striking and spotting symptoms visible on the outer bark. (Dark spots are natural bark plates.) Credit: Mick Biddle, Forest Research



Fig 2: "Leopard-spot" staining and streaking (brown to dark violet) under the bark. Credit: Thomas Cech, BFW, Austria



Fig 3: Sparse crown of London plane dying from *Ceratocystis platani* infection in southern France. Credit: Mick Biddle, Forest Research



Fig 4: Section of infected plane timber showing dark streaks due to infection. Credit: Andre Vigouroux, ENSA, bugwood.org

- The ascomycete fungus *Ceratocystis platani* causes canker stain of plane. It affects several species of plane trees. Infection is usually fatal; trees of 30-40cm trunk diameter can die in as little as two years.
- *C. platani* causes pronounced staining (dark brown-violet streaks/spots) under bark (Fig. 1 & 2); these are more visible externally when the bark surface is wet. Staining can extend longitudinally in sapwood at a rate of 50–100cm per year.
- *C. platani* affects the water-conducting vessels of trees, causing severe wilting of the canopy and creating a sparse, thin crown with discoloured leaves (Fig 3).
- Sunken, elongated or lens-shaped cankers can be seen alongside lesions with orange and purple streaking around the periphery. These may become roughened and darker over time. Dark discoloured streaks can extend towards the centre of the stem or branches (Fig 4).



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Department of
Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

This is a **notifiable** pathogen; if you see it, you must report it.

If you suspect the presence of the pest, please inform the relevant authority.

How to report

Please report symptoms using the following online reporting tools for tree pests and diseases. Reports should provide precise details of the location and, if possible, clear, well lit, close-up photographs of the symptoms.

In **Great Britain** - TreeAlert – [Tree Alert \(forestresearch.gov.uk\)](https://treealert.forestresearch.gov.uk) <https://treealert.forestresearch.gov.uk>

In **Northern Ireland** - [Tree Check](http://www.treecheck.net) (www.treecheck.net), or phone app

For suspected sightings made on trade premises, such as nurseries, garden centres, ports and wood processing mills:

In **England or Wales**, contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA):

Email: planthealth.info@apha.gov.uk or tel: 0300 1000 313 web: www.gov.uk/plant-health-controls.

For **Scotland**, contact the Scottish Government's Horticulture and Marketing Unit:

Email: hort.marketing@gov.scot or tel: 0131 244 8923 web: www.gov.scot/PlantHealth/PlantDiseases.

For **Northern Ireland**, contact the DAERA Plant Health Inspection Branch:

Email: planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk or tel: 0300 200 7847

web: daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/plant-and-tree-health/about-plant-and-tree-health.

For additional information on UK Plant Health please see:

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/pests-and-diseases/uk-plant-health-risk-register/>

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/>