

Pest Alert: Thousand Cankers Disease



Fig 1. Desiccated canopy of *J. nigra*, with flag leaves still present



Fig 2. Canker and insect hole shown clearly after bark removal.



Fig 3. Multiple cankers shown on tree trunk and branch. All photos courtesy of Lucio Montecchio, Universita di Padova (IT).

- The pathogen responsible for **thousand cankers disease** (*Geosmithia morbida*) is spread by the North American bark beetle *Pityophthorus juglandis* – **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, with widespread death in the USA. *Juglans regia* (common walnut) is less susceptible, but tree decline may cause reduced nut production, and mortality has been reported.
- 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. The only current effective control to prevent spread is tree destruction.

If you suspect the presence of the pest, please inform the relevant authority (see over for details).

For finds at garden centres, plant nurseries or private gardens in England and Wales, contact your local APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspector, or the PHSI headquarters, in York:

Tel: 0300 1000 313 (please select option 3 when calling)

Email: planthealth.info@apha.gov.uk

Web: <https://www.gov.uk/plant-health-controls>

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

Email: hort.marketing@gov.scot

Web: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/plant/PlantHealth>

For Northern Ireland, contact DAERA Plant Health Inspection Branch:

Tel: 0300 200 7847

Email: planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk

Web: www.daera-ni.gov.uk

For finds in the wider environment:

<https://treealert.forestresearch.gov.uk/>