

Pest Alert: Granulate ambrosia beetle (*Xylosandrus crassiusculus*)



Fig 1. Characteristic “toothpick” frass. They can reach between 5–7 cm but are fragile and easily knocked off by wind or rain. ©Jim Baker, North Carolina State University, Bugwood.org



Fig 2. An adult female. Males are smaller and do not leave larval galleries. Photo courtesy of J.R. Baker & S.B. Bambara, North Carolina State University, Bugwood.org



Fig 3. Gallery, pupae, and adult. ©Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported (CC BY-SA 3.0)

- **The granulate ambrosia beetle (*Xylosandrus crassiusculus*)** is a bark beetle native to Asia, but is now found globally including in Europe. It was first noted in Italy in 2003 and spread to France in 2014. It is now found in **France, Italy, Slovenia, and Spain**.
- The beetle attacks many species of **woody plants** and is a pest of **broadleaved trees**. Where introduced it has become a **pest of fruit tree orchards** and **ornamental tree nurseries**. This beetle usually prefers stressed trees, but it is also known to attack healthy young trees as well as stacked timber.
- The adult beetles are **reddish-brown in colour and some 2 to 3 mm in length (Fig 2)**. Males are flightless but females can fly and disperse to potential host trees. Females excavate tunnels and lay eggs. The larvae develop and enlarge the tunnels (**Fig 3**).
- Infestation leads to **wilting, dieback** and in some cases **death of the tree**. Serious attacks on young trees are often low down around ground level. On established trees, they attack near existing damage. When feeding the beetles push the frass (excrement) out of galleries in a **characteristic toothpick fashion**, giving the trunk or stem a spikey appearance (**Fig 1**). Toothpick strands of frass will increase in number as the infestation worsens.
- The most likely pathway for this beetle to enter the UK is on **timber or wood packaging material**, but there is also a possibility of it arriving on imported nursery trees.

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

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

Agricultural crops contact the local RPID officer: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/AOcontacts/contacts>

For non-agricultural crops, email: hort.marketing@gov.scot

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

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

Web: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/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/>

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

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

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk>

For finds in the wider environment: In GB, please use Tree Alert: <https://treealert.forestresearch.gov.uk/>

For NI, please use TreeCheck: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/about-treecheck>