

Pest Alert: Potato cyst nematodes (*Globodera pallida* & *Globodera rostochiensis*)



Figures 1 - 3 from L-R: Potato crop showing significant patches of poor growth, and plants that are wilted and yellowing. A potato tuber showing signs of pitting and rot. Pin-head sized cysts visible on potato plant roots (figs 1-2 © Crown copyright, courtesy of Fera Science Ltd, fig 3 © DAFWA 2024).

- **Potato cyst nematodes (PCN)** are a serious pest of potatoes which can significantly reduce yields by attacking the **roots** leading to **plant stunting** and crop yield loss. High levels of infestation can cause an **entire crop to be lost**.
- They are present in many countries but are particularly widespread across Europe, including **the UK**.
- The cysts that appear on the roots are **only just visible to the naked eye**. They are the swollen bodies of female nematodes filled with eggs. These cysts break open and release their eggs which once hatched can then **infect the next potato crop** that is planted.
- The main host is potato, but they can also feed on the roots of **tomatoes, aubergines** and certain **other plant species**.
- PCN cannot travel very far on their own, but they can be moved in **soil on harvested potatoes, farm equipment** and **footwear**. The cysts may also be spread short distances by **wind** or **farm animals**, or washed to new locations in **floodwater**.

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



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

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

Email: planthealth.info@apha.gov.uk

For Scotland, contact the Scottish Government:

For potato tuber crops contact the local RPID officer: www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/AOcontacts/contacts

For all other host plants with roots, bulbs and rhizomes 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: daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/plant-and-tree-health

For additional information on UK Plant Health please see:

<https://www.pcnhub.ac.uk/>

<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>

[The Seed Potato Classification Scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Seed & Ware Potatoes | SASA \(Science & Advice for Scottish Agriculture\)](http://www.gov.uk)