

**Animal and Plant Health Agency**

# **Xylella fastidiosa**

## **Information about controls for importers and users of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants**

**Updated: April 2020**

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Dieback of *Lavandula x allardi* (Lavender) infected by *Xylella fastidiosa* subsp. *multiplex* in France. Courtesy: Agnès POIRIER, NPPO of France.

This guide is intended for all plant: growers, retailers, landscapers, garden designers, traders, importers whether outside of the European Union (EU) or from the EU and within the UK.

## Summary of key points

- This disease has the potential to have huge implications for the UK horticultural trade and the wider environment. It is, therefore, imperative that all parties are aware of the importance of following the official measures put in place.
- There are large outbreaks of *Xylella fastidiosa* in Italy, France (Corsica and mainland France), Spain (islands of Mallorca, Menorca and Ibiza and mainland Spain) and mainland Portugal. A very small outbreak in Germany was declared eradicated in March 2018.
- An outbreak in the UK could lead to destruction of host plants within 100 m, and a 5 km movement ban for 'specified' plants for five years.
- The range of plant species found to be infected within the EU has increased and includes trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. Keep checking the list:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant\\_health\\_biosecurity/legislation/emergency\\_measures/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosecurity/legislation/emergency_measures/index_en.htm)

- Landscapers, designers, retailers and anyone directly importing plants are now subject to the same stringent requirements as growers and suppliers. As part of EU Smarter Rules for Safer Food (SRSF) changes to plant health, all 'professional operators' must be registered and authorised to issue plant passports and all plants for planting must be plant passported.
- From 1 March 2018, additional requirements must be met for certain high risk plants of *Coffea*, *Lavandula dentata*, *Nerium oleander*, *Olea europaea*, *Polygala myrtifolia* and *Prunus dulcis* shall only be moved once the authorised plant passporters site has had an annual official inspection, sampling and testing of plants to confirm the absence of *X. fastidiosa*. Suppliers and recipients of these plants must keep records for 3 years. Then from 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018, additional requirements were introduced for *Polygala myrtifolia* requiring that plants moved from production sites must be officially visually inspected and sampled as close to the time of movement as possible. Then from 21<sup>st</sup> April 2020, new National Measures were introduced under which the entry of *Coffea* and *Polygala myrtifolia* into England is prohibited together with stronger import requirements for other high-risk hosts (i.e. Olive, Almond, *Nerium Oleander*, Lavender and Rosemary). *Olea europaea* and *Prunus dulcis* are prohibited entry into England, except if *Olea europaea* and *Prunus dulcis* meet stringent derogation requirements. Plants of *Rosmarinus*, *Lavandula* and *Nerium oleander* must meet other national measure requirements. See the [Plant Health Portal](#)
- Import controls for material from third countries outside the EU remain. All plants for planting are subject to import controls and must be accompanied by a valid plant health (phytosanitary) certificate.
- During the transition period (up to 31<sup>st</sup> Dec'. 2020), plant passports must accompany all plants for planting imported from the EU. After that, phytosanitary certificates will be required for such plants  
[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/plant\\_health\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/plant_health_en.pdf). National legislation came into force on 26 November 2018 requiring that *Olea europaea* plants from the EU must be notified to APHA in writing. All *Prunus* plants (including *Prunus dulcis*) must be notified. Notification requirements are also in place for certain other plant species, details [here](#). After the transition period, pre-notification requirements will apply for all plants imported with a phytosanitary certificate.
- Suspected outbreaks of *X. fastidiosa* or any other non-native plant pest must be reported to the relevant Plant Health Service authority:  
For England and Wales, contact your local APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspector or the PHSI Headquarters, Sand Hutton, York. Tel: 01904 405138 Email: [planthealth.info@apha.gov.uk](mailto:planthealth.info@apha.gov.uk)  
For Scotland, contact the Scottish Government's Horticulture and Marketing Unit by

Email: [hort.marketing@gov.scot](mailto:hort.marketing@gov.scot)

For Northern Ireland, contact the DAERA Plant Health Inspection Branch: Tel: 0300 200 7847 Email: [planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk)

For Forestry Commission use the tree alert form: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/treealert>

## Xylella fastidiosa: the facts

### The disease

*X. fastidiosa* is a bacterial pathogen, which is already present in parts of France, Italy, Spain and Portugal. If it enters the UK it could have a wide and damaging impact on nursery stock production, urban landscapes and the countryside. It blocks the water conducting tissues and causes multiple symptoms including wilts, diebacks, stunts, leaf scorches and plant death. The UK is on high alert for this pathogen and we must be especially vigilant, as the pathogen has not been recorded here. As the insect vector is native to the UK and also widespread, an outbreak of *X. fastidiosa* could have significant impacts. The pathogen has four known subspecies which affect different hosts. In the America's widespread damage has been recorded, including affecting up to 35% of urban plantings in New Jersey, USA as well as causing severe damage to citrus, coffee and olive production. For further information please see the additional reference sources at the end of this document.

### Timeline (for disease spread in the EU)

*X. fastidiosa* subspecies *pauca* was first confirmed in Europe in 2013 causing devastation to olive plantations in southern Italy. In 2015, *X. fastidiosa* subsp. *multiplex*, was identified affecting a number of host species in France and Corsica. In July 2016 *X. fastidiosa* subsp. *fastidiosa* was confirmed in a glasshouse in Germany on a *Nerium oleander* plant and subsequently on *Rosmarinus*, *Erysimum* and *Streptocarpus*. By spring 2018 Germany had eradicated the disease. In October 2016, infected *Prunus* trees on Mallorca were found and then other hosts on Ibiza and Menorca. The Balearics have many outbreaks and three different subspecies of *X. fastidiosa* have been found. At the end of June 2017 *X. fastidiosa* subsp. *multiplex* was found on the Spanish mainland (south of Valencia) in *Prunus dulcis*, then in spring 2018 in an olive tree near Madrid and then a *Polygala myrtifolia* nursery in Almeria. In autumn 2018, *X. fastidiosa* subsp. *multiplex* was detected in a range of genera in Tuscany, Italy. *X. fastidiosa* subsp. *multiplex* was also confirmed from an asymptomatic *Lavandula dentata* plant in a zoo in the north of Portugal. The disease is now widespread across Northern Portugal affecting many different plant species. In September 2018, Xylella was confirmed in three symptomatic olive trees in

Belgium, which had originated from Spain in May 2018. Annex 1 below lists the current hosts of *X. fastidiosa* in the EU, new hosts are recorded frequently.



Leaf scorch and die back of *Olea* (olive) infected by *X. fastidiosa*. Photo: Dr. Neil Giltrap (Defra, UK)

## UK controls

Anyone receiving host plants from suppliers in the UK, needs to ensure that they are accompanied by a valid plant passport confirming they have been sourced from disease free areas/sites. After the transition period, imports of regulated plants from the EU must arrive with a valid plant health (phytosanitary) certificate.

The already extensive list of host species recorded in Europe is likely to grow and includes species of oak, maple, *Hebe* and higher risk hosts (*Coffea*, *Lavandula dentata*, *Nerium oleander*, *Olea europaea*, *Polygala myrtifolia* and *Prunus dulcis*) and many other popular plants for gardens, landscapes and forestry. The host list is updated frequently see [https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant\\_health\\_biosecurity/legislation/emergency\\_measures/xylella-fastidiosa/susceptible\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosecurity/legislation/emergency_measures/xylella-fastidiosa/susceptible_en)

All UK authorised plant passporting businesses must have 'host plants' officially inspected annually and ensure plants are accompanied by a UK plant passport – see Annex 1 for

hosts as of April 2019. In practice this means that landscapers, designers, retailers and anyone directly importing plants are now subject to the same stringent measures as growers and suppliers. The plant passport can be used to underpin and help businesses record audits and include in assurance schemes plants they have received or traded, as this in turn can help investigations into potential finds of the disease or limit any actions taken at premises.

Find out more about plant passports: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plant-health-controls>

Any nursery or other professional operator not previously authorised to trade in material covered by the plant passporting scheme should also contact their local Plant Health inspector to find out what may be required. Contact details are on page 2 of this guide.

The EU measures permit the movement of host plants from demarcated areas if they meet certain stringent conditions, but this option is not routinely applied and there is a legal requirement to notify Plant Health Services of any 'specified plants' (as defined in the EU legislation) received from a demarcated area, to facilitate tracing and targeted checks. Details of currently demarcated areas are available on the [European Commission web site](#)

Passporters need to make contact with their local Plant Health Inspector if they trade in a *X. fastidiosa* hosts not covered by an existing authorisation.



Symptoms on *Rosmarinus officinalis* in an infested area of the Alicante province (Spain, 2018). Note: this plant has not been tested but similar symptoms were observed on plants that have been confirmed by testing. Courtesy: Camille PICARD (EPPO)

The UK has developed and published a contingency plan for dealing with *X. fastidiosa* should it be found. The UK plan is at [Plant Health Portal](#)

## In the event of an interception or outbreak in the UK

The way a finding of *X. fastidiosa* will be dealt with will depend on where the infection is likely to have occurred, the risk or evidence of any spread and what early actions are undertaken.

The first decision is on the need to demarcate an infected area and a buffer zone. Where there is evidence that the plants recently arrived on site already infected and vectors carrying the organism are not found then no demarcated area will be needed. To limit the risk of spread the Plant Health Service would require destruction of the infected host plants and is likely to destroy any potential hosts in close proximity.

Where the disease is found on a plant and it has spread or there is risk that spread may have occurred then a 5 Km demarcated area is required but the eventual size and length of time it remains in place will depend on a risk assessment.

For isolated outbreaks resulting from introductions of infected plants where there is robust evidence that spread has not occurred and specified actions have been taken, it may be possible to reduce the buffer zone width to 1km and to revoke restrictions after a minimum 12 months period. Decisions on whether this provision would apply would be taken on a case by case basis.

These specified actions include removing all hosts irrespective of their health status immediately from within 100 m of the infected plants, an intensive survey to show that no infected plants or vectors are present in the infested area and no evidence of spread is detected within the 5 Km buffer zone.

Period of restrictions: If evidence of spread is detected then statutory movement restrictions will remain within a buffer of radius 5km for a five year minimum after official surveys have confirmed that *X. fastidiosa* is not present. The 'specified plants' listed in the emergency decision could only be moved within or outside of the demarcated area (which is the infected area, plus a buffer zone of 5km), if they have been grown under physical protection and provided certain other requirements have been met. Insecticidal application will be required within the demarcated area in order to control vectors which spread *X. fastidiosa*.



*X. fastidiosa* symptoms on *Prunus* (cherry). Courtesy: Donato Boscia. CNR - Institute for sustainable plant protection, UOS, Bari (IT) Laboratory, Angers (FR)

## Industry best practice

- Check the most up to date guidance and legislation, including supplementary Defra requirements which impose additional restrictions to those in EU legislation.
- Ensure that plant passports arriving with host plants are correct and keep the plant passport to aid trace back if necessary. This may also support assurance schemes your business may be in.
- Source from known suppliers or visit suppliers to view their processes, procedures, bio-security arrangements and the plants they grow. Follow the guidance on high risk hosts <https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/assets/factsheets/Xylella-host-info-notev8final.pdf>
- Make sure that imported plants both originate from and are sourced from disease free areas. Details on infected (demarcated) areas in Europe [https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/plant/docs/ph\\_biosec\\_legis\\_list-demarcated-union-territory\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/plant/docs/ph_biosec_legis_list-demarcated-union-territory_en.pdf)
- Isolate or quarantine new batches of plants and monitor them during the growing season for signs of the disease – whilst not a legal requirement it is good practice to place ‘imported’ hosts of *Xylella* in a quarantine area – ideally a good distance away from other host plants and if possible place under physical protection. If any outbreak is confirmed all ‘host’ material within 100 m will need to be destroyed

- For contractors/designers, ensure that plants you use have been ordered early and monitored for disease in a low risk area, before being planted at their final destination.
- Label and keep records of the identity of all received batches of plants including: where the plants came from and when. Plant passports must be kept for 3 years.
- Maintain records of pesticide treatments.
- Destroy old or unusable plants.

## Annex 1: Host plants found to be susceptible to *X. fastidiosa* in the European Union

*Acacia dealbata*

*Acacia saligna*

*Acer pseudoplatanus*

*Amaranthus retroflexus*

*Anthyllis hermanniae*

*Artemisia arborescens*

*Asparagus acutifolius*

*Calicotome spinosa*

*Calicotome villosa*

*Catharanthus species*

*Cercis siliquastrum*

*Chenopodium album*

*Cistus albidus*

*Cistus creticus*

*Cistus monspeliensis*

*Cistus salviifolius*

*Coffea*

*Convolvulus cneorum*

*Coprosma repens*

*Coronilla glauca*

*Coronilla valentina*

*Cytisus scoparius*

*Cytisus villosus*

*Dimorphotheca fruticosa*

*Dodonaea viscosa*

*Eremophila maculata*

*Erigeron bonariensis*

*Erigeron sumatrensis*  
*Erysimum*  
*Euphorbia chamaesyce*  
*Euphorbia terracina*  
*Euryops chrysanthemoides*  
*Euryops pectinatus*  
*Ficus carica*  
*Fraxinus angustifolia*  
*Genista x spachiana*  
*Genista corsica*  
*Genista ephedroides*  
*Genista lucida*  
*Grevillea juniperina*  
*Hebe*  
*Helichrysum italicum*  
*Helichrysum stoechas*  
*Heliotropium europaeum*  
*Juglans regia*  
*Laurus nobilis*  
*Lavandula angustifolia*  
*Lavandula dentata*  
*Lavandula stoechas*  
*Lavandula x allardii*  
*Lavandula x chaytorae*  
*Lavandula x intermedia*  
*Lonicera japonica*  
*Medicago sativa*  
*Metrosideros excelsa*  
*Myrtus communis*  
*Myoporum insulare*  
*Nerium oleander*  
*Olea europea*  
*Pelargonium x fragrans*  
*Pelargonium graveolens*  
*Phagnalon saxatile*  
*Phillyrea latifolia*  
*Polygala myrtifolia*  
*Prunus armeniaca*  
*Prunus avium*  
*Prunus cerasifera*

*Prunus cerasus*  
*Prunus domestica*  
*Prunus dulcis*  
*Quercus suber*  
*Rhamnus alaternus*  
*Rosa canina\**  
*Rosmarinus officinalis*  
*Spartium junceum*  
*Streptocarpus*  
*Teucrium capitatum*  
*Ulex europaeus*  
*Ulex minor*  
*Veronica elliptica*  
*Vinca*  
*Vitis vinifera*  
*Westringia fruticosa*  
  
*Westringia glabra*

*Rosa multiflora* was removed by EU Commission following notification from France.

## Other sources of information

Defra X. fastidiosa factsheet:

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/assets/uploads/Xf-Plant-Pest-Factsheet-2017v2.pdf>

European Commission:

[https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant\\_health\\_biosecurity/legislation/emergency\\_measures/xylella-fastidiosa\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosecurity/legislation/emergency_measures/xylella-fastidiosa_en)

EPPO (European Plant Protection Organisation):

[http://www.eppo.int/QUARANTINE/special\\_topics/Xylella\\_fastidiosa/Xylella\\_fastidiosa.htm](http://www.eppo.int/QUARANTINE/special_topics/Xylella_fastidiosa/Xylella_fastidiosa.htm)

Pictures of hosts with symptoms at EPPO <https://gd.eppo.int/taxon/XYLEFA/photos>

Forest Research:

<https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/pest-and-disease-resources/xylella-xylella-fastidiosa/>

For additional information on UK Plant Health please see:

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/> <https://www.gov.uk/plant-health-controls>  
<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/>



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APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.