

Chalara dieback of ash (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) in Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Credit: Forestry Commission



Credit: Fera



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Ash dieback is caused by a fungus called *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*. The fungus was previously called *Chalara fraxinea*, and the disease is therefore still often referred to as Chalara dieback of ash.

Chalara dieback of ash was first detected in the UK in 2012. UK national plant health legislation prohibits all imports and internal movement of ash seeds, plants and trees. However, because the disease is only spread by spores released from fruiting bodies on ash leaves, there are currently no restrictions on the movements of felled ash timber.

Chalara dieback of ash causes leaf loss, crown dieback and bark lesions in affected trees. However, shoot death and dieback in ash trees can have a number of causes, and there can also be considerable variation in the time when ash trees come into leaf. So, if an ash tree does not have any leaves on it in April and May, it does not necessarily mean that it is diseased or dying, but by mid-June all healthy ash should be in full leaf.

If you see trees you think are affected by pests or diseases, including Chalara dieback of ash, the easiest way to report this is by using the Forestry Commission's web-based TreeAlert system (treealert.forestry.gov.uk). Before reporting suspected Chalara dieback of ash, please check the on-line interactive map at chalaramap.fera.defra.gov.uk to see if the fungus has already been confirmed in your local area. If this is the case, no further action is needed.

However, in the event that you wish to report a suspected tree pest or disease through TreeAlert, you will need three photographs of the affected tree – one from a distance (ideally showing the tree in its surroundings), one closer (showing the pattern of symptoms on the affected tree) and a close-up of any affected twigs/branches. Once submitted, your report will be looked at by Forest Research scientists within one working day and, if needed, a follow-up visit will be arranged through the tree health team in Natural Resources Wales.

If your trees are affected by Chalara dieback of ash, please don't panic. The disease can take many years to develop in mature ash trees, not all trees will die and some may well recover from the disease to go on to produce disease-tolerant offspring. We recommend that affected ash trees are not felled unless they pose a real danger to the public, animals or property. However, young trees are more likely to succumb quickly to the disease and you may wish to consider replacing recently-planted ash trees with alternative species.

More information about Chalara dieback of ash can be found on the Welsh Government website at gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/forestry/tree-health, which includes links to information hosted by partner organisations that are actively working together to protect the trees and woodlands in Wales.