

Scotland & Northern Britain

Phytophthora austrocedrae

A species of *Phytophthora* never previously recorded in Britain has been found causing root disease and mortality of Nootka cypress (below) and Lawson cypress in Scotland. The pathogen, known as *Phytophthora austrocedrae*, was first described in 2007 from widespread dieback and mortality of *Austrocedrus chilensis* (Cupressaceae) in southern Argentina and Chile. Work is now underway to determine the status of *P. austrocedrae* in Scotland and northern England.



Contact:

Sarah Green
sarah.green@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/pathology

Storm damage

On May 23rd this year, hurricane force winds in excess of 70 mph ravaged the west coast of Scotland and northern England. Deciduous species, including a range of broadleaves as well as larch, suffered severe foliage browning (below) due to desiccation and salt damage to vulnerable, recently expanded leaves. The damage was most noticeable on coastal trees but also extended for several miles inland.



Larch casebearer

Several enquires were received this spring concerning damage to larch caused by the larch casebearer (*Coleophora laricella*). This insect pest mines within the needles in the spring and summer, causing the needle tips to go brown and wither (below). Examination under a microscope reveals puncture holes in damaged needles. Affected larch trees can show browning of the entire crown.



England & Wales

One to watch for – *Chalara fraxinea*

Chalara fraxinea is a new fungal pathogen which attacks ash, causing a disease known as ash dieback (below left). Not yet present in Britain, it has become widespread in Europe. When severe, the entire crown shows leaf loss and dieback. Typically, leaves wilt with black-brownish discoloration at the leaf base and midrib. Lesions appear on the bark of stems and enlarge to form perennial cankers (below right).



Oak Jewel beetle

Oak Jewel beetle (*Agrilus biguttatus* [= *panonicus*]) can be found on many trees suffering from Acute Oak Decline (AOD). Until the late 1980s, this beetle was restricted to a few ancient oak sites in Britain, but has since become more widespread, breeding in oaks as young as 50 years. The larvae feed on the inner bark, emerging as adults through characteristic 'D' shaped exit holes (below). The role of this beetle in AOD is currently under investigation.



Massaria disease of London plane

Massaria disease of London plane (*Platanus x hispanica*), caused by the fungus *Splanchnonema platani*, has been spreading northwards in Europe since the late 1990s. Since 2010, the disease has been found at several sites in London and also in Oxford. It causes long strip cankers on the upper side of lateral branches (below left) and can lead to branch failure when the exposed wood is weakened by decay fungi (below right).



Contact:

David Rose
david.rose@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/pathology