

Forestry Commission introduces new controls on bark beetle tree pest

New Plant Health requirements are being introduced by the Forestry Commission to further control the spread of the larger eight-toothed European spruce bark beetle (*Ips typographus*) in Kent and East Sussex.

Woodland managers, landowners, the forestry industry and tree nurseries will need to provide written notification to the Forestry Commission if they intend to fell susceptible spruce material, or kill any trees of the genus *Picea* A. Dietr over three metres in height, within the demarcated area.

In addition, prohibitions on susceptible material being left in situ in the demarcated area following felling, without written authorisation from an inspector, will be implemented. A new Notice enforcing these measures will come into force on Wednesday 22nd December 2021, building on existing restrictions on the movement of susceptible materials out of or within the demarcated area.

Nicola Spence, the UK Chief Plant Health Officer, said:

The eight-toothed spruce bark beetle poses no threat to human health, but can have a serious impact on spruce trees species and the forestry industry.

We are taking swift and robust action to limit the spread of the outbreaks as part of our well-established biosecurity protocol used for tree pests and diseases. These new restrictions in the demarcated area will further strengthen this strategy, as part of our ongoing eradication efforts.

Any sightings should be reported to the Forestry Commission via its [TreeAlert online portal](#).

The UK Chief Plant Health Officer confirmed breeding populations in two woodlands in Kent on 25 June and 1 July 2021 following routine Forestry Commission plant health surveillance activities. Following extensive surveillance, a total of 13 outbreak sites were identified in Kent and East Sussex. Swift and robust action was taken in response to the outbreaks, with active eradication efforts now ongoing across all sites.

Following a finding of the beetle in woodland in Kent in 2018, a demarcated area was introduced covering parts of the South East of England. A Notice further extending the boundary of the demarcated area to prevent the accidental spread of the pest was implemented on 29th October 2021.

Further [information on tree pests and diseases, and how to identify them, is available here](#).

Landowners are asked to report any suspect trees via [TreeAlert](#).

A new Notice, set to come into force on Wednesday 22nd December, will include the below clauses relating to the felling, killing and movement of susceptible material within the demarcated area:

- Restriction on felling susceptible material without prior notification. A person must notify the Forestry Commission in advance in writing of their intention to fell any relevant susceptible material within the demarcated area.
- Restriction on killing any trees of the genus *Picea A. Dietr*, over three metres in height, without prior notification. A person must notify the Forestry Commission in advance in writing of their intention to kill (e.g. by ring-barking or chemical killing) any trees of the genus *Picea A. Dietr*, over three metres in height, within the demarcated area.
- Prohibition on susceptible material being left in situ. No person may leave any relevant susceptible material arising from any felling in situ in the demarcated area unless authorised in writing by an inspector.
- Prohibition on the movement of susceptible material. No person may move any relevant susceptible material out of or within the demarcated area, unless authorised in writing by an inspector.