

# Forestry Commission takes robust action to combat spread of tree disease



Image of resinous cankers on a tree branch. Credit: Forest Research.

The Forestry Commission is urging woodland managers, landowners and the forestry industry to remain vigilant following further findings of *Phytophthora pluvialis* in areas across England.

The UK Chief Plant Health Officer has confirmed findings in the parts of the country following extensive surveillance activities by the Forestry Commission and other parts of the UK Plant Health Service.

*Phytophthora pluvialis* is a fungus-like pathogen known to affect a variety of tree species, including western hemlock, Douglas fir, tanoak and several pine species (in particular radiata pine). It is reported to cause needle cast (where needles turn brown and fall off), shoot dieback, and lesions on the stem, branches, and roots.

*Phytophthora pluvialis* has been detected on mature western hemlock and Douglas-fir trees at the affected sites, and has been confirmed as the direct cause of the observed symptoms.

Forestry Commission, Forest Research and the Animal and Plant Health Agency are continuing to conduct further surveillance and diagnostic analysis to understand more about the pathogen and ensure that any required control measures are swiftly undertaken to stop its spread. This includes extensive ground and aerial surveillance as part of a UK-wide survey, and comprehensive research and modelling to explore factors such as climatic and potential species susceptibility and to help inform the management response. The introduction and extensions of demarcated areas help to prevent the accidental movement of tree pathogens.

**Nicola Spence, the UK's Chief Plant Health Officer, said:**

We are taking robust and swift action against the findings of *Phytophthora pluvialis* at these sites, as part of our well-established biosecurity protocol for tree pests and diseases.

I urge all sectors to support efforts to tackle this pathogen by checking the health of western hemlock and Douglas-fir trees. [Key symptoms](#) to look out for are lesions on the stem, branch or roots. Any sightings should be reported to the Forestry Commission via its [TreeAlert online portal](#).

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### **New measures in response to these findings include:**

For behind-the-scenes insight into the ongoing science, surveillance and eradication efforts controlling the spread of *Phytophthora pluvialis*, [read this blog](#).

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

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

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Last updated 9 June 2022 [+ show all updates](#)

#### 1. 9 June 2022

Updated the section 'New plant health requirements introduced to combat further spread of the tree pathogen *Phytophthora pluvialis*'

#### 2. 14 April 2022

The Forestry Commission is urging woodland managers, landowners and the forestry industry to remain vigilant following further findings of *Phytophthora pluvialis*.

#### 3. 25 February 2022

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