

New legislation to prevent harmful rose virus

New legislation has been introduced today to stop the arrival of the [Rose Rosette Virus \(RRV\)](#), a damaging virus which is spread by a microscopic mite.

The virus causes 'witches' broom', distorted leaf growth and a reduction in cold hardiness. All roses are considered at risk from the virus and its insect vector, as no known tolerant or resistant species or varieties have been identified.

The virus is not present in the UK or Europe, but has caused significant damage in the USA and Canada. The new regulation means that all rose plants and cut flowers imported from Canada, India, Mexico or the USA must be accompanied by an official phytosanitary certificate confirming that they have been grown in an area free from RRV.

Nicola Spence, Defra Chief Plant Health Officer said:

Protecting our country from pests and diseases is vital to safeguard our environment, economy and health.

The Rose Rosette Virus poses a serious threat to our iconic roses. We have already seen the damaging effects it has had in North America and we know it would easily spread if it were found in this country.

That is why we are implementing strong preventative measures to ensure the virus does not arrive in the first place.

The UK Plant Health Risk Group identified the threat early through the UK plant health risk register screening process. This resulted in a European-wide pest risk analysis (EPP0) and the introduction of these new regulations.

Recently infected plants may not develop symptoms until later on in the season. The mites which carry the virus can be wind-blown to nearby plants.