

UK plant health guidance

Xylella fastidiosa: Information about controls for importers and users of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants.

Updated August 2018



Leaf scorch of Polygala myrtifolia (Milkwort) infected by Xylella fastidiosa subsp. multiplex in Corsica. Photo: Bruno Legendre, Anses Plant Health Laboratory,

This guide is intended for all plant: growers, retailers, landscapers, garden designers, traders, importers whether outside of the European Union (EU) or from within the EU and within the UK.

Summary of key points:

- This disease has the potential to have huge implications for the UK horticultural trade and the wider environment. It is, therefore, imperative that all parties are aware of the importance of following the measures put in place. These are initiated at EU level and are non - negotiable.
- There are outbreaks of *Xylella fastidiosa* in Italy, France (Corsica and mainland France), Spain (islands of Mallorca, Menorca and Ibiza and mainland Spain). In spring 2018, Germany declared it had eradicated the disease.

- An outbreak in the UK could lead to destruction of host plants within 100 m, and a 5 km movement ban for 'specified' plants for five years.
- The range of plant species found to be infected within the EU is likely to increase and already includes trees, shrubs and herbaceous. Keep checking the list: http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosecurity/legislation/emergency_measures/index_en.htm
- Landscapers, designers, retailers and anyone directly importing plants are now subject to the same stringent requirements as growers and suppliers. There is now a plant passporting obligation on all 'professional operators', this requires that prior to the movement of all 'host plants' across the EU they must have been officially inspected and be accompanied by a plant passport to show they have been sourced from disease free areas/sites.
- There are additional requirements for certain hosts considered to be high risk. From 1 March 2018, plants of *Coffea*, *Lavandula dentata*, *Nerium oleander*, *Olea europaea*, *Polygala myrtifolia* and *Prunus dulcis* shall only be moved once the authorised plant passport holder has had an annual inspection and the plants have been sampled and tested. Suppliers and recipients of these plants must keep records for 3 years.
- Be vigilant for signs of *X. fastidiosa* and report any suspicious sightings.
- Import controls for material from third countries outside the EU remain. All plants for planting are subject to import controls and must be accompanied by a valid plant health (phytosanitary) certificate.
- Suspected outbreaks of *X. fastidiosa* or any other non-native plant pest must be reported to the relevant Plant Health Service authority.
- If you would like to discuss this guidance further or report a suspect finding, here are our contact details:

For England and Wales, contact your local APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspector or the PHSI Headquarters, Sand Hutton, York. Tel: 01904 405138

Email: planthealth.info@apha.gsi.gov.uk

For Scotland, contact the Scottish Government's Horticulture and Marketing Unit by

Email: hort.marketing@gov.scot

For Northern Ireland, contact the DAERA Plant Health Inspection Branch: Tel: 0300

200 7847 Email: planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk

For Forestry Commission use the tree alert form: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/treealert>

Xylella fastidiosa: the facts

The disease:

X. fastidiosa is a bacterial pathogen, which has been found in parts of France, Italy, Spain and if it enters the UK it could have a wide and damaging impact on nursery stock production, urban landscapes and the countryside. It causes multiple symptoms including wilts, diebacks, stunts, leaf scorches and plant death. The EU is on high alert for this pathogen and we must be especially vigilant in the UK, as the pathogen has not been recorded here. As the insect vector is already native to the UK an outbreak of *X. fastidiosa* could have significant impacts. The pathogen has four known subspecies which affect different hosts, in the America's widespread damage has been recorded, including affecting up to 35% of urban plantings in New Jersey, USA as well as causing severe damage to citrus, coffee and olive production. For further information please see the additional reference sources at the end of this document.

Timeline (for disease spread in the EU):

X. fastidiosa subspecies *pauca* was first confirmed in Europe in 2013 causing devastation to olive plantations in southern Italy. In 2015, *X. fastidiosa* subsp. *multiplex*, was identified affecting a number of host species in France and Corsica. In July 2016 *X. fastidiosa* subsp. *fastidiosa* was confirmed in a glasshouse in Germany on a *Nerium oleander* plant and subsequently on *Rosmarinus*, *Erysimum* and *Streptocarpus*, by spring 2018 Germany had eradicated the disease. In October 2016, infected *Prunus* trees on Mallorca were found and then other hosts on Ibiza and Menorca. The Balearics now have many outbreaks and three different subspecies of *X. fastidiosa* have been found. At the end of June 2017 *X. fastidiosa* subsp. *multiplex* was found on the Spanish mainland (south of Valencia) in *Prunus dulcis*, then in spring 2018 in an olive tree near Madrid and then a *Polygala myrtifolia* nursery in Almeria. Annex 1 below lists the current hosts of *X. fastidiosa* in the EU, new hosts are recorded frequently.



Leaf scorch and die back of *Olea* (olive) infected by *Xylella fastidiosa*. Photo: Camille Picard (DGAL-SDQPV, FR)

EU controls:

Anyone receiving host plants from suppliers in the UK or the rest of the EU, needs to ensure that they are accompanied by a valid plant passport confirming they have been sourced from disease free areas/sites.

The already extensive list of host species recorded in Europe is likely to grow and includes species of oak, maple, *Hebe* and higher risk hosts of *Coffea*, *Lavandula dentata*, *Nerium oleander*, *Olea europaea*, *Polygala myrtifolia* and *Prunus dulcis* and many other popular plants for gardens, landscapes and forestry. The host list is updated frequently see http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosecurity/legislation/emergency_measures/index_en.htm

All 'professional operators' must have 'host plants' officially inspected annually and ensure plants are accompanied by a plant passport – see Annex 1 for hosts as of February 2018. In practice this means that landscapers, designers, retailers and anyone directly importing plants are now subject to the same stringent measures as growers and suppliers. The plant passport can be used to underpin and help businesses record audits and include in assurance schemes plants they have received or traded, as this in turn can help investigations into potential finds of the disease or limit any actions taken at premises.

Additional requirements apply to the higher risk hosts described above, which must be from a site where the annual official inspection includes systematic testing of the plants concerned, using a prescribed sampling system. These supplementary requirements took effect from 1 March 2018.

Find out more about plant passports: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plant-health-controls>

Passporters will need to make contact with their local Plant Health Inspector if they trade in a *X. fastidiosa* hosts not previously covered so their authorisation to passport can be extended.

Any nursery or other professional operator not previously authorised to trade in material covered by the plant passporting scheme should also contact their local Plant Health inspector to find out what may be required. Contact details are at the end of this guide.

Although the EU measures permit the movement of host plants from demarcated areas if they meet certain stringent conditions, in practice no nurseries have been authorised for plant passporting in such areas. If this were to change, there is a legal requirement to notify Plant Health Services of any 'specified plants' (as defined in the EU legislation) received from a demarcated area, to facilitate tracing and targeted checks. Details of currently demarcated areas are available on the European Commission website at:



http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosecurity/legislation/emergency_measures/index_en.htm

Each EU member state must develop and publish a contingency plan for dealing with *X. fastidiosa* should it be found. The UK plan is under review following new EU rules agreed in October 2017 and will be published once this process is complete.

In the event of an interception or outbreak in the UK

The way a finding will be dealt with will depend on where the infection occurred, the risk or evidence of spread and what early actions are undertaken.

The first decision is on the need to demarcate an infected area and a buffer zone. Where there is evidence that the plants recently arrived on site already infected and vectors carrying the organism are not found then no demarcated area will be needed. To limit the risk of spread the Plant Health Service would require destruction of the host plants and is likely to destroy any potential hosts in close proximity.

Where the disease is found on a plant and it has spread or there is risk that spread may have occurred then a 5 Km demarcated area is required but the eventual size and length of time it remains in place will depend on a risk assessment.

For isolated outbreaks resulting from introductions of infected plants where there is robust evidence that spread has not occurred and specified actions have been taken, it may be possible to reduce the buffer zone width to 1km and to revoke restrictions after a minimum 12 months period. Decisions on whether this provision would apply would be taken on a case by case basis.

These specified actions include removing all hosts irrespective of their health status immediately from within 100 m of the infected plants, an intensive survey to show that no infected plants or vectors are present in the infested area and no evidence of spread is detected within the 5 Km buffer zone.

Period of restrictions: If evidence of spread is detected then statutory movement restrictions will remain within a buffer of radius 5km for a five year minimum after official surveys have confirmed that *X. fastidiosa* is not present. The 'specified plants' listed in the emergency decision could only be moved within or outside of the demarcated area (which is the infected area, plus a buffer zone of 5km), if they have been grown under physical protection and provided certain other requirements have been met. Insecticidal application will be required within the demarcated area in order to control vectors which spread *X. fastidiosa*.



Xylella fastidiosa symptoms on *Prunus* (cherry). Courtesy: Donato Boscia. CNR - Institute for sustainable plant protection, UOS, Bari (IT) Laboratory, Angers (FR)

Industry best practice:

- Ensure that plant passports arriving with host plants are correct and keep the plant passport to aid trace back if necessary. This may also support assurance schemes your business may be in.

- Source from known suppliers or visit suppliers to view their processes, procedures, bio-security arrangements and the plants they grow. Follow the guidance on high risk hosts <https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/assets/uploads/Xylella-host-info-note-version5.pdf>
- Make sure that imported plants both originate from and are sourced from disease free areas. Details on infected areas http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosecurity/legislation/emergency_measures/index_en
- Isolate or quarantine new batches of plants and monitor them during the growing season for signs of the disease – whilst not a legal requirement it is good practice to place ‘imported’ hosts of *Xylella* in a quarantine area – ideally a good distance away from other host plants and if possible place under physical protection. If any outbreak is confirmed all ‘host’ material within 100 m will need to be destroyed
- For contractors/designers, ensure that plants you use have been ordered early and monitored for disease in a low risk area, before being planted at their final destination.
- Label and keep records of the identity of all received batches of plants including: where the plants came from and when.
- Maintain records of pesticide treatments.
- Destroy old or unusable plants.
- Comply with the UK national requirements to notify the UK Plant health Service about certain species of plants under the ‘EU Plant and Tree notification scheme’.

Annex 1: Host plants found to be susceptible to *X. fastidiosa* in the Union territory, must be officially inspected and plant passported:

Acacia dealbata

Acacia saligna

Acer pseudoplatanus

Anthyllis hermanniae

Artemisia arborescens

Asparagus acutifolius

Calicotome spinosa

Calicotome villosa

Catharanthus species

Cercis siliquastrum

Chenopodium album

Cistus creticus

Cistus monspeliensis

Cistus salviifolius

Coffea

Coronilla glauca

Coronilla valentina

Cytisus scoparius

Cytisus villosus

Dodonaea viscosa

Eremophila maculata
Erigeron bonariensis
Erigeron sumatrensis
Erysimum
Euphorbia terracina
Euryops chrysanthemoides
Ficus carica
Fraxinus angustifolia
Genista x spachiana
Genista corsica
Genista ephedroides
Genista lucida
Grevillea juniperina
Hebe
Helichrysum italicum
Heliotropium europaeum
Juglans regia
Laurus nobilis
Lavandula angustifolia
Lavandula dentata
Lavandula stoechas
Lavandula x allardii
Lavandula x intermedia
Medicago sativa
Metrosideros excelsa

Myrtus communis
Myoporum insulare
Nerium oleander
Olea europea
Pelargonium x fragrans
Pelargonium graveolens
Phagnalon saxatile
Phillyrea latifolia
Polygala myrtifolia
Prunus avium
Prunus cerasifera
Prunus cerasus
Prunus domestica
Prunus dulcis
Quercus suber
Rhamnus alaternus
*Rosa canina**
Rosmarinus officinalis
Spartium junceum
Streptocarpus
Vinca
Vitis vinifera
Westringia fruticosa
Westringia glabra

**Rosa multiflora* was removed by EU Commission following notification from France.

Other sources of information:

- Defra *X. fastidiosa* factsheet:
<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/assets/factsheets/xylellaFastidiosa2015.pdf>
- European Commission:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosecurity/legislation/emergency_measures/xylella-fastidiosa/index_en.htm
- EPPO (European Plant Protection Organisation):
http://www.eppo.int/QUARANTINE/special_topics/Xylella_fastidiosa/Xylella_fastidiosa.htm
- Pictures of hosts with symptoms at EPPO <https://gd.eppo.int/taxon/XYLEFA/photos>
- Forestry Commission: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/bee-h-a3vemx>

For additional information on UK Plant Health please see:

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/> <https://www.gov.uk/plant-health-controls>
<https://www.dardni.gov.uk/>

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