Forestry Commission

Tree Health Pilot Case Studies for the proactive management of spruce within the *Ips typographus* demarcated area

The eight-toothed spruce bark beetle *(Ips typographus)* is a serious pest of spruce trees in Europe. It was first found in England on Norway spruce in woodland in Kent as part of routine plant health surveillance activity in 2018.

All landowners, managers and timber processors should remain vigilant for this pest, particularly in areas where spruce may be stressed or damaged. Through the Tree Health Pilot, grants are available to manage or fell spruce trees, restock woodland and maintain newly planted trees.

Hole Park Estate

Hole Park is a family-owned estate in Kent, in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, comprising of farmland, mixed woodland and renowned gardens. The estate have a history of growing Christmas trees, including spruce, for the local market. In 2021 the estate engaged with Plant Health Forestry (PHF) at the Forestry Commission to host pheromone traps for *Ips typographus* on the site. In early 2022, PHF surveillance identified an *Ips typographus* susceptible site in a 1.13 ha spruce plantation suffering from windblow. The landowner was advised to remove this susceptible material which was potentially at risk of an infestation of the beetle, and was made aware of the Tree Health Pilot grant scheme.

They made the decision to remove all remaining spruce on the estate, which were often remnant trees from former plantations. Following a successful grant application, they obtained support for the costs of felling, restocking, maintenance, and biosecurity capital items.

Biosecurity

Pests such as *Ips typographus* can be spread through infested bark and vegetation. To minimise the risk of potential spread and avoid transmission of other pests and diseases during forestry operations, Hole Park used the grant scheme to purchase a pressure washer and to ensure any footwear, equipment, tools, and machinery were properly cleaned after use. This item will also help with future biosecurity on the estate as workers continually move between different areas and can prevent spreading other pests and diseases.

The proactive removal of the spruce was beneficial and timely as *Ips typographus* was identified on another woodland site locally and had no action been taken they could have been at a greater risk of an *Ips typographus* infestation and receiving a Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN).

Key facts

- **Location:** Hole Park Estate, Kent
- **Land type:** Norway spruce plantation and other remnant spruce around estate from old Christmas tree plantations
- **Area:** 1.13 ha plantation and 185 individual spruce trees (Norway, Serbian and Blue) across a 907 ha estate
- **Area restocked:** 1.13ha
- **Species restocked:** Oak, Wild Service, Field Maple, Hornbeam, Scots pine, Yew, Wild cherry, Holly, Hawthorn, Blackthorn
- **Grants applied for:** Felling, biosecurity, restocking, maintenance
- **Timeframe:** 12 months from Expression of Interest to completion of felling and restocking

"I am sure that every forester wants to see Ips typographus defeated so I was pleased to cooperate, having more to lose than most because we are significant Norway Spruce growers for the Christmas tree trade. Those plantations are actively monitored and managed so Ips typographus is not a significant threat in them, but we could not tolerate it building up in woodland nearby.

The Forestry Commission team have been fantastic by assisting with this new grant, of which I was a pilot applicant. Both sides were learning, fast. And I am proud that Hole Park is at the forefront in the battle against this controllable pest."

Edward Barham, owner of Hole Park

Moorlands

Moorlands is a residential home in East Sussex, where a small former Christmas tree plantation of Norway spruce had been left unmanaged in a corner of the 2.6ha garden. While largely protected from windblow, the trees were suppressed, and the landowner made the decision to remove the risk after becoming aware of *Ips typographus* through local involvement with trees and woodlands.

Support for trees outside of woodland

As the area of spruce was 0.14ha, it was eligible to apply for the Tree Health Pilot as a Trees Outside of Woodland application. The landowner engaged with an arboriculturist to carry out the felling, and applied to replant with a mix of native broadleaves to enhance biodiversity as well as providing aesthetic variety as the trees grow in their garden. The Tree Health Pilot maintenance grant supports activities needed to ensure the planted trees establish successfully, such as removing competing vegetation from weeds.

"I am very pleased with the support the Tree Health Pilot scheme has provided. The application process was straightforward and the funding provided has ensured we have been able to make the necessary transformations to the land helping to enhance future biodiversity with the tree replanting"

Calum Love, landowner

Key facts

- **Location:** Moorlands, East Sussex
- **Land type**: Peri-urban countryside house and garden
- **No. of hectares**: 0.14ha Norway spruce in 2.6ha garden
- **No. of trees restocked**: 100
- **Species restocked**: Hornbeam, small-leaved lime, hazel, oak, birch
- **Grants applied for**: Felling, restocking, maintenance
- **Timeframe:** 6 months from Expression of Interest to completion of felling

Proactive action vs. Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN)

All sites are different and have their own complexities, however acting proactively before your spruce trees are infested can improve the possibility and amount of timber revenue you can earn. It can also allow more time to plan without the requirements and deadline of a Statutory Plant Health Notice, which are issued when *Ips typographus* is identified. SPHNs require fast action to stop *Ips typographus* from further establishing and to eradicate it from a site. The biosecurity measures contained within the notice generally increase the operational costs (e.g. hiring of a chipper and transporting it to site) and reduce the value of timber that must be processed or destroyed on site.

Find out how we can support you to deal with *Ips typographus* on your land and the funding that is available to help.

Grants for spruce with or at risk of eight toothed spruce bark beetle - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Larger eight-toothed European spruce bark beetle (*Ips typographus*) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

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