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Biosecurity is a set of precautions that aim to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful plant organisms - pests (insects) and diseases (bacteria and fungi) and also invasive plant species such as Japanese Knotweed (photo) and Oxford Ragwort.



Bio-security:

We are being faced with more plant disorders as climate change allows migration and establishment possible for new pest and diseases. In addition to this the global market can allow new pests and diseases into the UK on packing material such as wooden pallets, vehicles and more directly from imported plants and seeds. Trees seem to make headlines much more often now as disorders become more apparent and potentially serious. Some of our most common and best loved trees are under serious threat, Ash, Horse Chestnut, Oak and Pine.

In terms of practical action as arborists we have attended seminars and receive up to date information from trade organisations and government departments such as FERA, the Forestry Commission and DEFRA on restrictions on movements of trees and timber and areas of new outbreaks of pests and diseases. We are also aware of the need to be careful not to transport invasive plants from site

Current advice involves a risk assessment to separate low risk and high risk activities, where a high risk is identified precautions such as disinfection of equipment, vehicles and footwear may be required.



Recently introduced Tree Pests and disorders -

- **Ash dieback.** (*Chalara fraxinea*). Now established in the UK, widely established in Europe and particularly Scandinavia. Young Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) die within 1 year. The fungal disease starts in the leaves and spreads to the current year's growth and then older wood. Initially leaves remain attached and withered, infected older wood has sunken cankers and a grey discoloration extends into the sapwood. Once affected, the trees cannot be cured but they must be reported and their condition monitored. At present Ash plants and seed cannot be imported into the UK and movements throughout the UK are banned. This disease does not affect Mountain Ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*). Foliage from felled trees should remain on site and be burned or buried, wood may be moved.
- **Oak Processionary Moth** (*Thaumetopoea processionea*). Currently in the south east mainly around W. London Boroughs. The caterpillars are found defoliating Oak (*Quercus Spp*) trees and form communal web-like nests, following each other between nest and feeding

site. They shed their skin and the small brown hairs that cover their bodies cause respiratory problems and skin rashes. Abandoned nests should be treated with care as they are full of hairs shed from skin.

- **Emerald Ash borer** (*Agrilus planipennis*). May be on its way here as it is currently in Russia, west of Moscow and moving into northern Europe. The larvae of the green bullet shape beetle bore into wood of Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) causing yellowing and thinning of foliage and death of trees.
- **Horse chestnut leaf miner** (*Cameraria ohridella*). Widespread throughout UK. The mines appear translucent, the leaves look as if early autumn has arrived in late summer and the photosynthetic ability of the tree is reduced as the leaves dry out, curl and fall. Trees become very disfigured and this can lead to pressure for removal.



- **Asian longhorn beetle.** (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) is thought to have arrived in the UK in wooden packing material and attacks a wide range of common broadleaf trees, the adult is large, obvious, 40mm long, black and white with very long antennae. The larvae burrow into the

wood and commence maturation feeding. Asian long horn beetles are currently in Kent subject to eradication measures.

- **Phytophthora ramorum.** Formerly known as **sudden Oak death** in USA, Rhododendron is the main host species in UK but now mainly a concern in forestry as a cause of death in Larch (*Larix Spp*) in SW England. The spores are spread in water and mists through the air and are easily transported on foot and vehicles, disinfection after leaving infected areas is important. Ramorum can also infect Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*), Beech (*Fagus Sylvatica*) and Turkey Oak (*Quercus cerris*) but not on a large scale. Ramorum attacks the above ground parts, shoots and leaves with blackend spots and lesions. Bark infections show as weeping dark patches high on the stems.
- **Red band needle blight** A widespread fungal disease (*Dothistroma septosporum*) affects a range of conifers but particularly Corsican Pine (*Pinus nigra var. maritima*) and lodgepole Pine (*Pinus contorta var. latifolia*). Needles develop yellow and tan bands which soon turn red the ends then needle tips turn reddish brown, these symptoms are most apparent in June and July. The trees have a lions tail appearance with only a tuft of current years foliage remaining.

Next Issue: Invasive plant species