

REPORT OF THE WOODLAND OFFICER

SUBJECT: ASH DIEBACK UPDATE

Purpose of Report

1. To provide members with an update on Chalara Fraxinea (Ash Dieback) in Wales
2. For members to note its content

Introduction

3. Chalara fraxinea (Ash Dieback) is a serious fungal disease that affects ash trees. The disease causes leaf loss and crown dieback in affected trees, and usually leads to tree death. In Denmark more than 90% of Ash trees have been affected.
4. Chalara fraxinea was first noted in Poland in 1992, it was first found in the UK last year (2012) mainly in new plantings, with some occurring in the wider environment in the East of England. A survey in the autumn found Chalara was present at 19 new planting sites in Wales. On May 13th it was reported that Chalara had spread to trees in the wider environment in Wales near Ferryside in Carmarthenshire.
5. The Information in this report has been obtained from the Forestry Commission.

The disease

6. Government scientists have set out the most up-to-date understanding of the disease;
 - the spores are unlikely to survive for more than a few days
 - spore dispersal on the wind is possible from mainland Europe
 - trees need a high dose of spores to become infected
 - spores are produced from infected dead leaves during June to September
 - there is a low probability of dispersal on clothing or animals and birds
 - the disease will attack any species of ash
 - the disease becomes obvious within months rather than years
 - wood products would not spread the disease if treated properly
 - once infected, trees can't be cured
 - not all trees die of the infection - some are likely to have genetic resistance
7. The symptoms of Chalara fraxinea are detailed in Appendix A attached.

Current Status

8. Chalara dieback of ash trees has been found in the wider environment in Wales for the first time, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) announced on May 13th. The infected area, in Ferryside, south of Carmarthen, was discovered by Natural Resources Wales staff during a routine inspection earlier this month. It is adjacent to a site which was planted with young ash trees between December 2006 and March 2007, some of which also have the disease. Samples were sent for scientific analysis, which confirmed the trees had become infected with Chalara.
9. There are 17,600 hectares of ash in Wales, which represents 6.8 per cent of the broadleaved woodlands. The species is important for its timber, firewood, wildlife, biodiversity and landscape benefits.
10. After oak and birch, common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) is the third most common native broadleaf tree in Great Britain.

Distribution in UK

11. Confirmed findings at 28 May 2013: See Map attached – Appendix B.

Nursery sites - 23

Recently planted sites - 296

Wider environment, e.g. established woodland - 183

Total: 502

Managing infected trees

12. You are not required to take any particular action if you own infected ash trees, unless NRW or another plant health authority serves you with a statutory Plant Health Notice. You should, however, keep an eye on the trees' safety as the disease progresses, and prune or fell them if they or their branches threaten to cause injury or damage. You can also help to slow the spread of the disease by, where practicable, removing and disposing of infected ash plants, collecting up and burning, burying or composting the fallen leaves.

Import and movement restrictions

13. To prevent further spread of the disease in Britain a Plant Health Order prohibits all imports of ash seeds, plants and trees, and all internal movement of ash seeds, plants and trees.
14. *C. fraxinea* is now being treated as a quarantine pest under national emergency measures and any suspected sighting should be reported.

PCNPA Action

15. Report any signs of Ash Dieback to the relevant Authority and PCNPA Woodland Officer
16. Implement appropriate biosecurity for Rangers and Wardens and others working on sites where Ash trees are present.
17. Consider a policy to remove infected trees/material on PCNPA managed sites where appropriate (to be defined), to limit spread of infection when infection becomes established in Pembrokeshire.

Recommendation

That members note the Information on Chalara.

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Ash dieback disease

(*Chalara fraxinea*)



1
Diseased saplings typically display dead tops and/or side shoots.



2
At the base of dead side shoots, lesions can often be found on the subtending branch or stem.



3
Lesions which girdle the branch or stem can cause wilting of the foliage above.



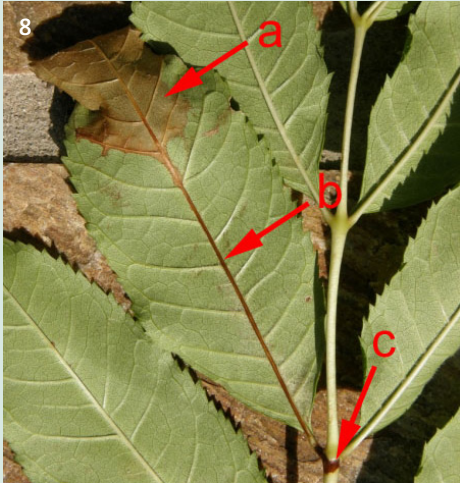
4
5
Mature trees affected by the disease initially display dieback of the shoots and twigs at the periphery of their crowns. Dense clumps of foliage may be seen further back on branches where recovery shoots are produced.



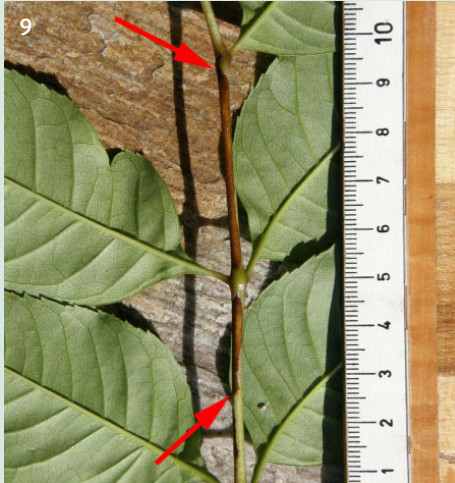
6
7
In late summer and early autumn (July to October), fruiting bodies of *Hymenoscyphus* can be found on blackened rachises (leaf stalks) of ash in damp areas of leaf litter beneath trees. These do not necessarily belong to the pathogen but can be tested to determine their identity.

Ash dieback disease

(*Chalara fraxinea*)



8 Leaf necrosis (a) extending into leaflet vein (b) and rachis (c).



9 Lesion on rachis (ends arrowed) without leaflet symptoms.



10 Necrosis of rachis (arrowed) and associated desiccation of leaflets.



11 Developing lesions associated with leaf scars.



12 Older lesion associated with leaf scar.



13 Developing lesion centred on a dead side shoot.



14 Older lesion centred on a dead side shoot.



15 Old lesion centred on a dead side shoot.



16 The wood and pith underlying bark lesions is usually strongly stained.

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Forestry Commission

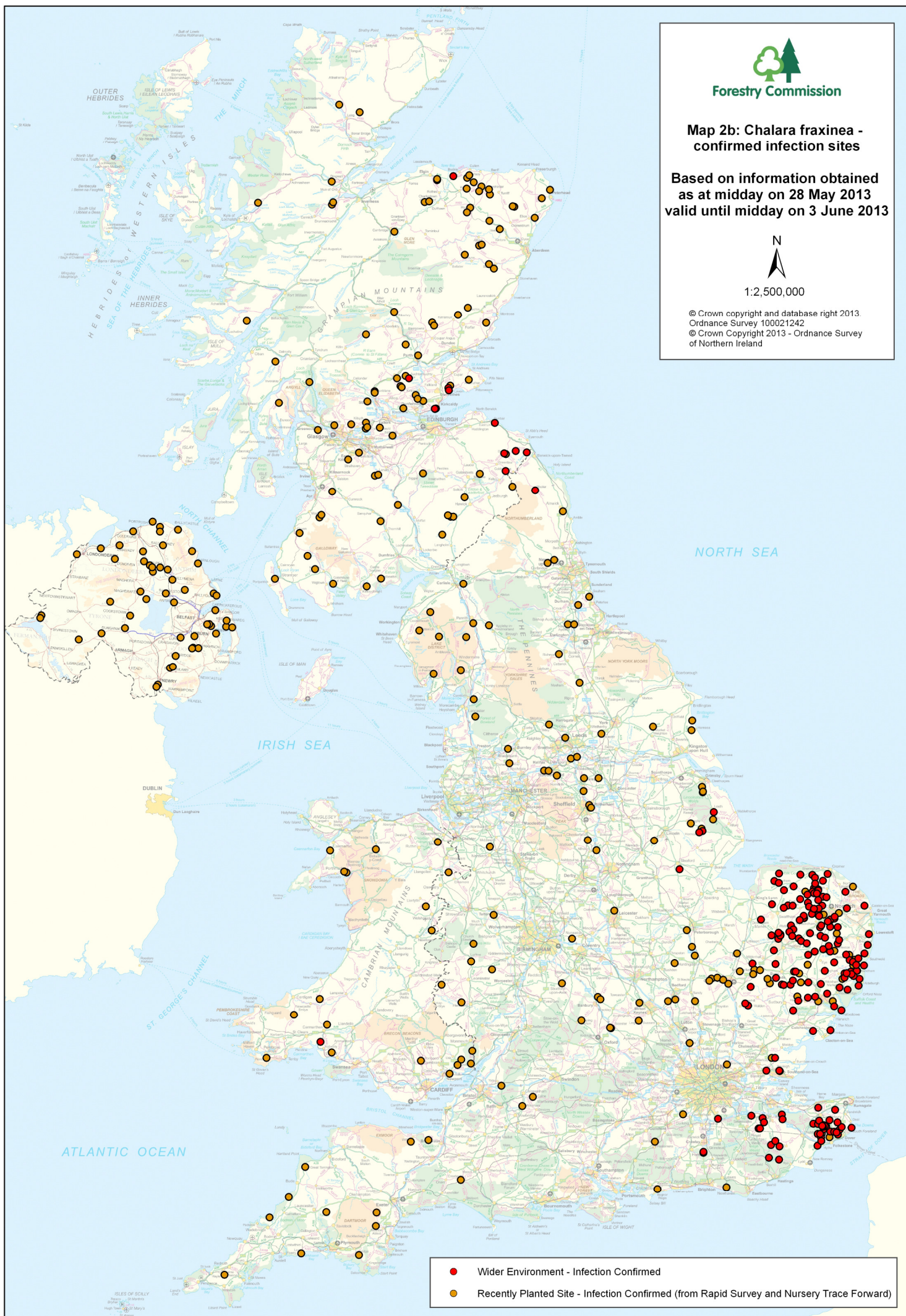
Map 2b: *Chalara fraxinea* - confirmed infection sites

Based on information obtained as at midday on 28 May 2013 valid until midday on 3 June 2013



1:2,500,000

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- Wider Environment - Infection Confirmed
- Recently Planted Site - Infection Confirmed (from Rapid Survey and Nursery Trace Forward)