

Xylella fastidiosa Implications for importers and users of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants

Update 12 (08/17)

This guide is intended for growers, retailers, landscapers, garden designers, traders and anyone involved in **importing and professional use of plants**, including from within the European Union (EU).

Key Points

- There are known outbreaks of *Xylella fastidiosa* in Italy, France (Corsica and mainland France), Germany and Spain (islands of Mallorca, Menorca and Ibiza and mainland Spain).
- An outbreak in the UK could lead to destruction of host plants within 100 m, and a 10 km movement ban for 'specified' plants for five years.
- The list of plants found to be infected within the EU is long and likely to increase and includes trees, shrubs and herbaceous. Keep checking: 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 measures as growers and suppliers. A new plant passporting obligation for all 'professional operators' has been introduced, which requires that the movement of all 'host plants' across the EU must be accompanied by a plant passport.
- Anyone importing host plants from the EU needs to ensure they are accompanied by a plant passport confirming they have been sourced from disease free areas/sites.
- Be vigilant for signs of *X. fastidiosa* and report any sightings.



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

Risk – why does this disease matter?

This disease has the potential to have huge implications for the UK horticultural trade and 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.

What is *Xylella fastidiosa*?

X. fastidiosa is a bacterial pathogen, which has been found in parts of France, Italy, Spain and in a glasshouse in Germany and could have a wide and damaging impact on nursery stock production, urban landscapes and countryside. It causes multiple symptoms including wilts, diebacks, stunts, leaf scorch 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 and a Pest Risk Analysis indicates it could establish here and have significant impacts. The pathogen has four known subspecies which affect different hosts and in North and South America 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 additional reference sources at the end of this document.

TIMELINE: *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*. **In October 2016** three *Prunus* trees were found infected on Mallorca 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). Annex 1 below lists the current hosts of *X. fastidiosa* in the EU, with new hosts recorded on a frequent basis.



Xylella fastidiosa (XYLEFA) - <https://gd.eppo.int>

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

What are the new controls?

Anyone importing host plants from 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, lavender, rosemary and many other popular plants for gardens, landscapes and forestry. The host list will be updated frequently and is available http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosecurity/legislation/emergency_measures/index_en.htm

A new plant passporting obligation for all 'professional operators' has been introduced, requiring that the movements of all 'host plants' across the EU must be accompanied by a plant passport – see **Annex 1** for hosts as of July 2017. 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. Find out more about plant passports here: <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 *Xylella* host 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.



Leaf scorch caused by *Xylella fastidiosa* on a *Coffea* originating from Ecuador (Interception) Courtesy: Bruno Legendre. Anses, Plant Health Laboratory, Angers (FR)

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 a contingency plan for dealing with *X. fastidiosa* should it be found.

What happens if the disease is found?

There are two ways the disease will be dealt with, depending on whether it is intercepted or an outbreak.

An interception occurs when the disease is found on a plant but it is unlikely to have spread to other plants. 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, which will be dependent upon local factors described below. Further survey work will be carried out to ensure that there has been no spread.

Examples of factors that will affect the level of action taken include: the time of year; whether the plants are outdoors or under protection; how long the plants have been on site; are in active growth; symptomatic of *X. fastidiosa*; their origin; their species; there are known disease vectors present etc. Plant Health Service actions would be focused on eliminating the risk of spread.

An outbreak occurs when the disease is found on a plant and it has spread or there is risk that spread may have occurred. An outbreak is compounded when some or all of the following may have occurred e.g. infected plants have been present on site for a long time, the presence of *Xylella* is confirmed in vectors, infection is confirmed in different batches from different sources indicating spread on site etc. **If an outbreak** is declared, the main measures that would be implemented are:

- 1) Destruction of all *Xylella* known 'hosts' plus other plants which may be infected, **within 100m** of the plants with confirmed infection.
- 2) Statutory movement restrictions within a **buffer of radius 10km for five years minimum**. 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 10km), if they have been grown under physical protection and provided certain other requirements have been met.
- 3) Insecticidal application in the demarcated area is obligatory in order to control vectors which spread *X. fastidiosa*.

- 4) Once all infected plants and suspect plants have been destroyed, the UK Plant Health Service will carry out latent testing of potential host plants. This means testing of plants which do not show symptoms, to see if they are infected.



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

Period of restrictions: the requirements for the demarcated area of the outbreak will remain in force for a minimum of **5 years** after official surveys have confirmed that *X. fastidiosa* is not present.

How the industry can help with good practice

- Ensure that plant passports arriving with 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-version3.pdf>
- Make sure that imported plants both originate from and are sourced from disease free areas. Details on infected areas at http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosecurity/legislation/emergency_measures/index_en.htm.
- 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 and must be plant passported:

Xylella fastidiosa* subsp. *multiplex

Acacia dealbata
Acer pseudoplatanus
Anthyllis hermanniae
Artemisia arborescens
Asparagus acutifolius
Calicotome villosa
Cercis siliquastrum
Cistus creticus
Cistus monspeliensis
Cistus salviifolius
Coronilla valentina
Cytisus scoparius
Cytisus villosus
Ficus carica
Fraxinus angustifolia
Genista x spachiana
Genista corsica
Genista ephedroides
Hebe species
Helichrysum italicum
Lavandula angustifolia
Lavandula dentata
Lavandula stoechas
Lavandula x allardii
Lavandula x intermedia
Metrosideros excelsa
Myrtus communis
Olea europea
Pelargonium graveolens
Phagnalon saxatile
Prunus cerasifera
Prunus domestica
Quercus suber
*Rosa canina**
Spartium junceum
Westringia fruticosa

Xylella fastidiosa* subsp. *pauca

Acacia saligna
Asparagus acutifolius
Catharanthus species
Chenopodium album
Cistus creticus
Dodonaea viscosa
Eremophila maculata
Erigeron sumatrensis
Erigeron bonariensis
Euphorbia terracina
Grevillea juniperina
Heliotropium europaeum
Laurus nobilis
Lavandula angustifolia
Lavandula stoechas
Myoporum insulare
Myrtus communis
Olea europaea
Pelargonium x fragrans
Phillyrea latifolia
Prunus avium
Rhamnus alaternus
Spartium junceum
Vinca species
Westringia fruticosa
Westringia glabra

Xylella fastidiosa* subsp. *fastidiosa *Cistus monspeliensis*, *Prunus avium*, *Streptocarpus*, *Erysimum*, *Vitis vinifera*

Host plants found to be susceptible to several subspecies of *Xylella fastidiosa*

Coffea species, *Lavandula dentata*, *Nerium oleander*, *Polygala myrtifolia*, *Prunus dulcis*, *Rosmarinus officinalis*

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

For more information:

Defra *Xylella fastidiosa* factsheet:

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/assets/factsheets/xylellaFastidiosa2015.pdf>

Other sources of information include:

European Commission:

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

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

EPPO: 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>

Advisory Information:

Suspected findings of *Xylella fastidiosa*

Suspected outbreaks of *X. fastidiosa* or any other non-native plant pest must be reported to the relevant Plant Health Service authority:

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. Tel: 0131 244 8935 Email: hort.marketing@gov.scot

For Northern Ireland, contact the DARD Plant Health Inspection Branch: Tel: 0300 200 7847 Email: planthealth@dardni.gov.uk

The Forestry Commission can also be contacted, using the tree alert form: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/treealert>

For additional information on UK Plant Health please see:

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/phiw/riskRegister/>

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

<https://www.dardni.gov.uk/>

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