

# Watch out for ash dieback

## (*Chalara fraxinea*)

### What is it?

Ash dieback is a relatively new, serious disease of ash trees caused by the fungal pathogen *Chalara fraxinea* (*Hymenoscyphus pseudoalbidus*). It has spread rapidly across much of Europe. The disease can affect ash trees of any age and in any setting. The disease can be fatal, particularly among younger trees.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine has confirmed findings of this disease in Ireland. As a result, the Department is carrying out and supporting a number of measures including legislative changes, surveillance, eradication, information campaigns, research and development of an all-Ireland strategy, etc.

### What does it look like?

The wide range of symptoms associated with ash dieback includes:

- foliage wilt – black/brown leaves may be retained;
- shoot dieback with brownish to orange discolouration, often multiple shoots; and,
- elongated angular stem lesions, often diamond shaped.

PLEASE SEE OVERLEAF FOR IMAGES

### How can it spread?

Many details associated with the biology of *Chalara fraxinea* still remain unclear. However, it is likely that plants for planting and wood are pathways for spread over long distances and the disease may be introduced into

Ireland through the imports of ash plants and wood, including firewood, from continental European countries.

### What to do?

#### Forest owners

Forest and land owners are asked to be vigilant for the disease and to report (with photographs, if possible) any sites where they have concerns about unusual ill health in ash, to:

- the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine: by email ([forestprotection@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:forestprotection@agriculture.gov.ie)); or, by phone (01-607 2651).

A scheme is in place to assist with eradication and replanting.

#### AEOS/REPS farmers

AEOS/REPS farmers are asked to be vigilant for the disease in ash trees planted under either of these schemes. In the case of positive *Chalara fraxinea* findings or ash trees showing symptoms of the disease, then AEOS/REPS farmers can apply in writing to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine for *force majeure*. If granted, these trees can be removed without affecting the participant's REPS/AEOS payments. Further information, including a *force majeure* application form, is available on the agri-environment section of the Department's website.

- AEOS farmers can contact the Department by email ([AEOS@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:AEOS@agriculture.gov.ie)); or, by phone (053-917 0365).

(please turn over)

- REPS farmers can contact the Department by email (REPS@agriculture.gov.ie); or, by phone (053-916 5593).

Please do not remove any plant material from a site containing suspect trees. Also, please observe the following hygiene measures on sites where the disease is suspected or where an ash survey is being carried out to help avoid its potential spread:

- footwear: wash off all soil and plant debris from boots. Spray your boots with disinfectant and dispose of any used water onto an area where the

water will not run into a watercourse;

- clothing: check all clothing for any plant material; and,
- tools and equipment: wash off all soil and plant debris, and disinfect and dispose of any used water onto an area where the water will not run into a watercourse.

When visiting a forest:

- do not remove any plant material from the site; and,
- clean clothes and footwear of any plant material, including leaves, before leaving the forest.

### Further information

- Contact your local Forestry Adviser, Forestry Inspector or Plant Health Inspector
- Visit: [www.teagasc.ie/forestry](http://www.teagasc.ie/forestry) and [www.agriculture.gov.ie](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie)

### Some ash dieback symptoms to look out for\*:



**Shoot dieback**  
with brownish to orange discolouration,  
often multiple shoots



**Elongated angular stem lesions**  
often diamond shaped



**Foliage wilt**  
black/brown leaves may be retained

\*Symptoms similar to the above may be caused by other factors, e.g., frost.