

# News Release

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## **Advice follows diagnosis of Chalara ash dieback disease in ash trees**

A disease that can prove fatal to ash trees has been detected in the Island for the first time, prompting a request to landowners to be vigilant and report possible cases.

The presence of Chalara ash dieback disease on private land in the south of the Island, and in the surrounding area, has been confirmed by a UK laboratory.

The disease, caused by a fungus, was detected in the UK in 2012 and is well-established there.

Control on imports has helped the Island to remain free of the disease until now. It is estimated that around one in five of the Island's hedgerow trees are ash.

While Chalara ash dieback is not harmful to other tree species or to the health of humans or animals, it can be fatal to ash trees, particularly younger specimens.

Not all ash trees die of the disease as some have a genetic tolerance or resistance to it and older trees can take longer to succumb.

The Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA) is advising landowners of the signs to look out for, the biosecurity steps they can take to reduce the risk of the disease spreading and what to do if they believe they have infected trees.

Chalara ash dieback is spread by spores that develop on infected dead stalks of the previous year's leaf fall in late spring and early summer.

It is predominantly dispersed on the wind but can also be spread by the transportation of infected leaf debris and contaminated soil.

Trees with the disease display unseasonal leaf loss, crown dieback and bark lesions.

DEFA recommends those with suspect ash trees on their land do not remove plant material.

Landowners can reduce the risk of disease spread by burning or composting ash leaf litter and keeping associated machinery, tools and vehicles clean.

Visitors to the countryside can also help by adopting simple biosecurity measures: not removing any plant material and by keeping footwear and clothing clean of soil and plant material.

DEFA says trees should be saved where possible and advises:

- If you suspect you have a tree with Chalara ash dieback, refer to the pictorial symptoms guide on the UK's Forestry Commission's website.
- If you remain concerned, contact a qualified tree surgeon who will advise you.
- If the tree surgeon confirms the disease, advise DEFA (with photographs) via [forestry@gov.im](mailto:forestry@gov.im), as DEFA will monitor the disease's progress.
- Do not fell infected trees without permission, needed under the Tree Preservation Act 1993.
- If trees are infected they do not necessarily need to be felled but, as with all trees, it is important to inspect their condition regularly where they could cause injury or damage to property.
- Where the public can access infected trees, display notices to raise awareness and advise of biosecurity steps that should be taken.

[Geoffrey Boot MHK](#), Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture, said: 'It's disappointing that this disease has reached the Island as it has the potential to change our landscape over time.

'In raising public awareness of its appearance and the steps to take if it's suspected, we hope it can be contained as far as possible.

'We are reviewing policies and procedures implemented elsewhere so we can take the most appropriate action to mitigate the impact of the disease on the Island.'

Ends

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**Photos:** [www.flickr.com/photos/iomdefa](http://www.flickr.com/photos/iomdefa)

**Further information:**

Advice and guidance on managing ash trees in the presence of Chalara can be found on the Forestry Commission website at [www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara) and [www.forestry.gov.uk/biosecurity](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/biosecurity).

A useful field guide is available to download from [http://www.observatree.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Field%20Guides%20Chalara\\_wip16.pdf](http://www.observatree.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Field%20Guides%20Chalara_wip16.pdf)