

## **What is happening to our ash trees?**

Over the last 2 weeks, the disease affecting our ash trees known as ash dieback has been widely broadcast in the news. The disease is caused by a fungus called *Chalara fraxinea*. The true extent of the disease is not known yet and we are waiting for advice from Central Government on how the disease is going to be managed.

Notable sites in Norfolk such as Lower Wood Ashwellthorpe and Holt Country Park have now had confirmation that the disease is present on their trees. New cases in the UK have been recently confirmed in South Kent and northwards to Newcastle with one site in Glasgow. We think the disease has reached us because spores have been carried across by the wind from Europe and also by the import of infected young ash trees.

## **The Facts**

The Forestry Commission website lists the following information as the most up-to-date understanding of the disease by government scientists:-

- spore dispersal on the wind is possible from mainland Europe
- the spores are unlikely to survive for more than a few days
- trees need a high dose of spores to become infected
- the spores are produced from infected dead leaves during the months of 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 in trees 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, and some are likely to have genetic resistance

## **Current position at Norfolk County Council**

- We have not been given any general advice on what action we would have to take if the disease is confirmed on our sites
- Trees that have the early symptoms of the disease are not likely to be imminently dangerous and we would not remove them at this time for health and safety reasons
- As the disease progresses through a tree and it starts to die we may have to consider felling it to make it safe. These symptoms will be easier to notice next spring and summer when the trees have come into leaf
- We are recommending that ash trees are not planted at present on Norfolk County Council sites. This may change in the future based on government research and advice
- Currently, we will not be enforcing biosecurity measures for the public on Norfolk County Council sites where no diseased trees have been found. If the Forestry Commission confirms the disease at any of our sites we will follow their advice on the biosecurity measures we need to take

- At present it is not possible to move ash material out of confirmed infected woodlands to be used as firewood

### **What can you do?**

Do not panic!

Have a look at the leaflets produced by the Forestry Commission.

- [Symptoms Guide](#)
- [Pest Alert Ash Dieback](#)

Also look at this video of symptoms

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=8sl7hgFZ-4g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=8sl7hgFZ-4g)

If you think you have seen trees on Council land that have these symptoms please contact the Biodiversity and Countryside team and we will come and have a look.

Please direct calls or emails to either:

- Anne Crotty - NCC Arboricultural Officer - 01603 222763  
[anne.crotty@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:anne.crotty@norfolk.gov.uk)
- Tom Russell Grant - NCC Assistant Arboricultural Officer – 224027  
[tom.russellgrant@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:tom.russellgrant@norfolk.gov.uk)
- Jason Kidman - NCC Forestry Officer – 222765  
[jason.kidman@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:jason.kidman@norfolk.gov.uk)
- Tina Wakefield - NCC Arboricultural Technician – 222118  
[tina.wakefield@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:tina.wakefield@norfolk.gov.uk)

If trees are not on NCC land then contact either:

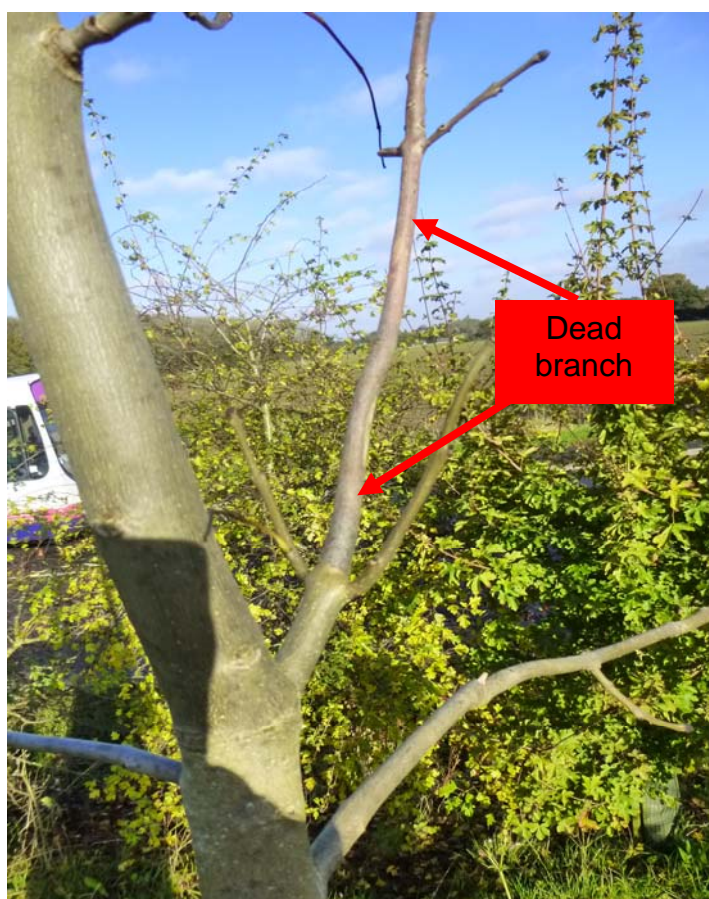
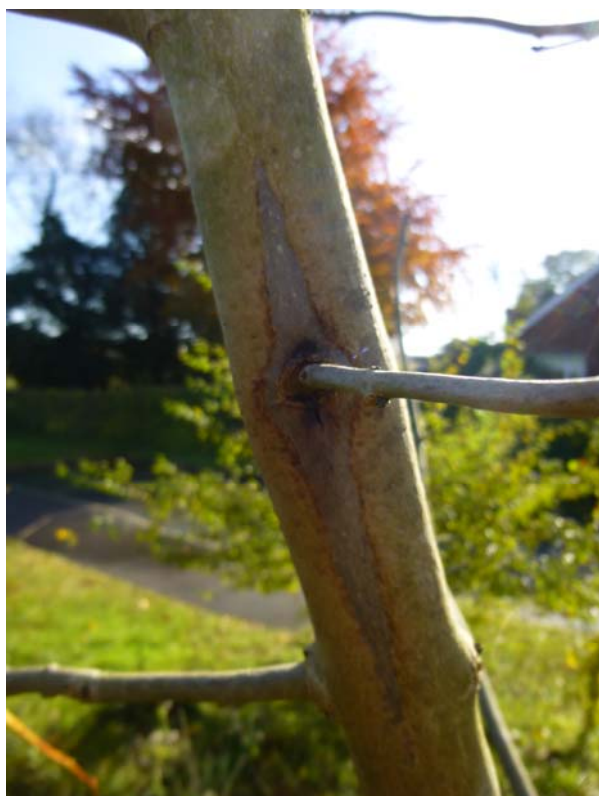
- Forestry Commission Plant Health Service  
T: 0131 314 6414;  
E: [plant.health@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:plant.health@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)
- Fera Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate  
T: 01904 465625;  
E: [planthealth.info@fera.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:planthealth.info@fera.gsi.gov.uk)

There is a smart phone application that is free to download that has details of the symptoms of ash dieback and allows you to automatically send in reports of infected trees [www.ashtag.org](http://www.ashtag.org)

Further information and updated advice can be obtained from the Forestry Commission website at [www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara)

## Symptoms of Ash Dieback (*Chalara fraxinea*) found in Norfolk November 2012

Diamond shaped lesions (not commonly observed but highly symptomatic)





Blackened Leaves with blackened leaf stems (minor symptoms can be similar to normal leaf fall)





**Trees with no symptoms of Ash Dieback (*Chalara fraxinea*) found in Norfolk November 2012**

A healthy tree that is late in losing its autumn leaves. Later this year these leaves are likely to turn yellow or light brown with no blackening on leaf stalks.



Seeds (keys) on a healthy tree

