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# PHC Bulletin Newsletter

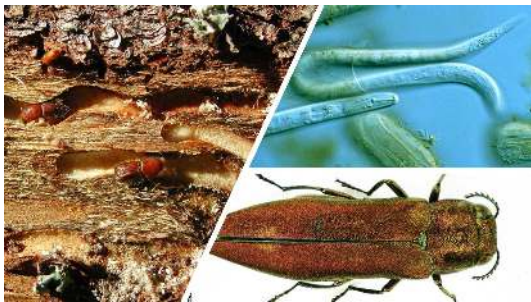


Updating you on recent activities of the Plant Health Centre

Issue 6, October 2021

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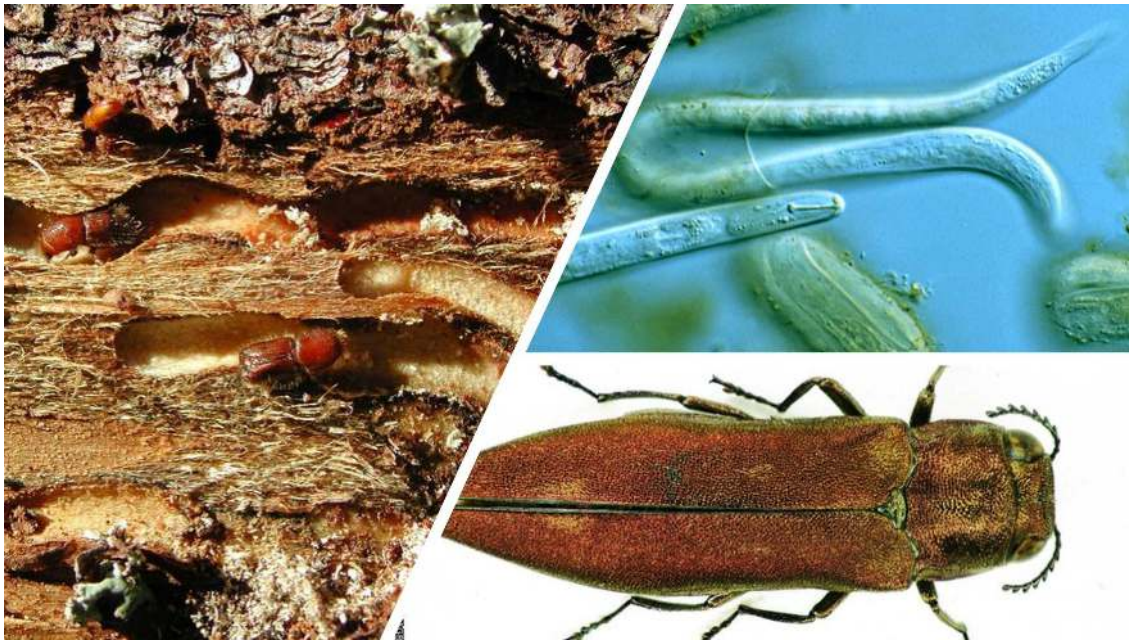


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## PHC News

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### *Welcome to Issue 6*

Welcome to the October edition of our news bulletin. Along with some much-needed warmth and sun, Summer brought with it further easing of covid-restrictions, and we hope that you were able to spend some time relaxing and recharging. Now the weather is turning decidedly more Autumnal, it's time to take stock of activity in the world of plant health over the last few months. In this issue you will find some news about changes to the quarantine list, as well as important changes to the *Phytophthora ramorum* action plan and the launch of a consultation for the next Plant Biosecurity Strategy for Great Britain. The PHC have been represented at a few events over the summer, and there are some notable upcoming events that may be of interest to you detailed in our Events section. We are very pleased to announce that applications are now open for two new PHC projects - one to develop best practice guidance for waste disposal and composting across sectors by identifying the plant health risks associated with plant waste disposal and peat-free growing media, and the other reviewing knowledge and practices for biosecurity methods to support plant health - see our New Project Calls section for more information. Lastly we have a short questionnaire from Ruth Mitchell, who is undertaking a Plant Health Fellowship for the PHC, based at NatureScot, that we kindly ask you to fill out if it's relevant to you.

### *New funding secured to tackle Potato Cyst Nematode*

As we have mentioned before in this bulletin, after commissioning a project on the future threat of PCN to Scotland's potato industry, the PHC coordinated a working of over 50 potato industry, government and academic partners was set up (from both Scotland and the wider UK) to identify a clear strategy for dealing with the PCN crisis. The final report from the working group, with costed recommendations, went to ministers, and we are extremely happy to report that on the 12th of August the Scottish Government announced that they are committing £2.2 Million for a project that will implement the recommendations of the PCN Working Group.

This project will be coordinated through the PHC and will involve the James Hutton Institute, Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), Biomathematics & Statistics Scotland (BioSS), Soil Essentials, Scottish Agronomy and Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA).

### *Pests old and new*

Since the previous issue of this bulletin was published, there have been a few new additions

to the Plant Health Risk Register and quarantine list, as well as calls to look out for pests already present:

The oak longhorn beetle (*Neocerambyx raddei*) and two-lined chestnut borer (*Agrilus bilineatus*) are now on the GB quarantine list, and as a result new measures apply to importation of wood, wood chips, plants for planting and isolated bark from certain host plants (from specific third countries) - see the regulation amendments listed [here](#).

The Forestry Commission has recently urged that woodland managers, land owners and tree nurseries to remain vigilant after new breeding populations of the eight-toothed spruce bark beetle (*Ips typographus*) were identified in Kent. Visit [here](#) for information on identification and reporting of this pest.

*Agrilus mali*, a beetle pest, mainly affecting *Malus* species (apple trees) has been added to the [UK Pest Risk Register](#), and identification of this pest will trigger statutory action. Currently it is only known to be present in parts of Asia, where it is native to eastern areas, and has been introduced to parts of Northwestern China where it is causing damage to wild apple trees. Further information can also be found on the [EPPO website](#).

### *Changes to the Phytophthora ramorum Action Plan*

*P. ramorum* can cause extensive mortality in larch trees, particularly in the wetter West of Scotland. It was first found in Scottish plant nurseries in 2002 and in gardens and parks in 2007. Infection on Scottish larch trees was confirmed in 2010. A revised Scottish Forestry [P. ramorum on larch Action Plan](#) was published in June 2021. Summaries of actions to be taken in the three zones – Priority Action zone (PAZ), Risk Reduction Zone (RRZ) and Management Zone (MZ) – can be found on the [Scottish Forestry website](#). Statutory Plant Health Notices (SPHNs) are issued requiring the felling of larch trees infected with *P. ramorum* plus larch within a 250-metre buffer zone everywhere in Scotland outside the Management Zone. More localised removal of *Rhododendron ponticum*, which can also host the pathogen, is also required.

This is important information not just for foresters, but for other tree ‘owners’ such as land managers. Please circulate this information to any practitioners or groups that you feel should be updated with the changes to the Action Plan. The Scottish Forestry website also has biosecurity information and disease biosecurity posters for land managers to ensure forestry workers and members of the public take appropriate biosecurity actions to minimise the risk of spreading *P. ramorum*.

### *Plant Biosecurity Strategy for Great Britain Consultation Launched*

On Tuesday 21st September, Defra [launched a consultation](#) on behalf of the governments of England, Scotland and Wales to inform Great Britain’s approach to plant biosecurity over the next five years. We wholeheartedly encourage you to feed into this consultation that will help inform the new GB Plant Biosecurity Strategy, to be published next year.

I hope that you enjoy reading the rest of our bulletin, and as always, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us (details at the end of this email) if you have any issues for plant health in Scotland that you would like to highlight to us, or questions that you have about our work. I hope that you all have a great Autumn!

-Sonia Humphris, Plant Health Centre Manager

### Images

Left: *Ips typographis* by Bjørn Økland, Norwegian Forest Research Institute, Bugwood.org.

Upper right: potato cyst nematode (*Globodera rostochiensis*), second stage juveniles and eggs - Ulrich Zunke, University of Hamburg, Bugwood.org

Lower right: *Agrilus mali* - Credit: Dr Wang Zhi-Yong (EPPO Photos)

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## Events



### *Potatoes In Practice*

On the 12th August the Plant Health Centre exhibited at Potatoes in Practice, the largest field-based potato event in the UK, hosted by the James Hutton Institute. Perhaps because this was one of the first in-person events since the covid-19 pandemic began the event was one of the best attended since it started, with over 500 visitors.

It was fantastic to be able to meet our stakeholders in the potato industry again, and we focused our exhibit on the newly announced £2.2 Million Scottish Government funding for a PHC-led project to tackle the growing threat of Potato Cyst Nematode, as well as our Pesticide Withdrawals projects, Key Principles for Plant Health and IPM management tool. In addition, our Director Ian Toth spoke at the morning's press briefing, and Fiona Burnett, our Agriculture Sector Lead delivered part of the event's welcome speech, highlighting the important issues of pesticide withdrawals, PCN and storage solutions. We all have our fingers crossed that the transition back to in-person events is a permanent one!

### *Arable Scotland*

Our Agriculture Sector Lead Fiona Burnett led the "IPM – Deriving the Benefits" session in the Arable Conversations at this year's Arable Scotland event. The session featuring panellists Caroline Drummond (LEAF), Andrew Moir (Arable Sector Climate Group) and David Howard (Hutchinsons). The session discusses the future direction of IPM and the wider links with climate and environmental challenges and is available on [YouTube](#).

### *Upcoming events*

You may be interested in the following events that have come to our attention:

The British Society for Plant Pathology Presidential Conference with European Federation for Plant Pathology EFPP - "Our Plants, Our Future", to be held on the 6-8th December 2021, is open for [registration](#).

For those interested in IPM, the AAB "Advances in Biocontrol, IPM" conference will be an hybrid event this year, hosted live and online on the 17th and 18th of November 2021.

The Amenity Forum annual conference will be held on the 21st of October 2021 at the Pirelli Stadium, and is a must attend event for all involved in or with an interest in the amenity sector, especially in relation to weed, pest and disease management.

Finally, Our Director Prof Ian Toth is delighted to be on the panel at "Climate Change Bites", a BBSRC virtual event exploring the future of diseases spread by insects & ticks and the impacts on our health and food. The event is on 21 Oct, 11am-1pm and is open to all. Learn more and register via Eventbrite

Image is of Dave Doogan, MP and Professor John Jones (James Hutton Institute) visiting the Plant Health Centre exhibit at Potatoes In Practice, and meeting Sonia Humphris (PHC Manager) - Image Credit: @DaveDooganSNP twitter account.

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## New Project Calls



We have two project calls currently advertised - take a look and if you think that you know someone who could deliver either of them then please pass the details on. If you have any questions relating to either call, then please get in touch at [info@PlantHealthCentre.scot](mailto:info@PlantHealthCentre.scot)

### *PHC2021/01 - Biosecurity practices to support plant health: a review of knowledge and practice*

There are aspects of biosecurity practice for which advice remains unclear or there are no commonly agreed best practices. Discussions with stakeholders have identified two broad situations where further evidence is needed on effective interventions to protect Scotland's plants:

1. How to achieve appropriate biosecurity on sites which are visited by many people, such as public gardens?

2. How to achieve appropriate biosecurity when moving machinery and equipment between sites, such as large-wheeled or tracked vehicles?

We invite proposals to review existing knowledge and established successful practices, including those from other countries, and potential new innovations that would support improved biosecurity.

*PHC2021/02 - Identifying the plant health risks associated with plant waste disposal and peat-free growing media, and developing best practice guidance for waste disposal and composting across sectors*

The UK's horticultural, agricultural, arboricultural and forest industries discard huge amounts of waste plant material (often diseased) and used potting mix, for which there is currently no guidance on safe disposal. In addition, large quantities of garden and food waste are also generated by local authorities, and many forms of organic waste are spread on agricultural land. The plant health and wider risks associated with poor composting practice could be significant and are not well understood.

This is a call to review current practices with stakeholders and seek evidence and expert opinion on the risks associated with these practices. A key outcome of this call will be the development of guidance on safe and effective composting methods for nursery-produced plant/soil waste, which is considered a top priority for the UK's new Plant Healthy Certification Scheme.

Please visit our [project calls page](#) for further details and application instructions for either of these projects.

Image credit: ADMC from Pixabay

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## Questionnaire - Plant health risks associated with habitat creation and/or restoration



Ruth Mitchel (the James Hutton Institute), who is currently undertaking the [Plant Health Fellowship](#) that the PHC are funding, based at NatureScot, has [written a blog](#) about her

fellowship and also asked that we circulate a questionnaire to help with her project. Please read on and fill out the survey if it's relevant to you!

Dear Bulletin Subscriber,

We are conducting a short survey to better understand the plant health risks (plant pests and pathogens) associated with habitat creation and/or habitat restoration. We are interested in finding out how aware those involved in habitat creation/restoration are of the potential plant health risks, what risk assessments they use and what guidelines they follow to minimize any risks. We are also interested in understanding what, if any new guidance with respect to plant health and habitat restoration/creation is required.

We would greatly appreciate your help in this study. The survey begins with a consent form and then asks a number of multiple choice questions that should take around 15 minutes to complete.

To help us in this study, please click the following survey link:

[Take the Survey](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

[http://hutton.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_aaByUVtNN7wPWjY](http://hutton.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aaByUVtNN7wPWjY)

We would appreciate responses from anybody who is involved in habitat restoration/creation in any way so please do forward this email on to any colleagues for whom it would be relevant.

The survey is run by Dr Ruth Mitchell from the James Hutton Institute on behalf of [Scotland's Plant Health Centre of Expertise](#) and [NatureScot](#)

Thank you for your time  
Ruth Mitchell

Image: Ruth Mitchell



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**Riaghaltas na h-Alba**  
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The Plant Health Centre is a virtual centre of expertise funded by Scottish Government through RESAS (Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division) to help tackle plant health challenges for Scotland



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