

Plant waste management knowledge exchange

Project Summary Report



www.planthealthcentre.scot



Royal
Botanic Garden
Edinburgh

This work was commissioned by Scotland's Centre of Expertise for Plant Health Funded by Scottish Government through the Rural & Environment Science and Analytical Services (RESAS) Division under grant agreement No [PHC2023/03](#)

Author: Matt Elliot¹

¹ Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, 20A Inverleith Row, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH3 5LR

Please cite this report as follows: M. Elliot (2023). Plant waste management knowledge exchange. Project Summary Report. Scotland's Centre of Expertise for Plant Health (PHC). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7688446

Available online at: planthealthcentre.scot/publications

Dissemination status: Unrestricted

Copyright: All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, modified or stored in a retrieval system without the prior written permission of PHC management. While every effort is made to ensure that the information given here is accurate, no legal responsibility is accepted for any errors, omissions or misleading statements. All statements, views and opinions expressed in this paper are attributable to the author(s) who contribute to the activities of the PHC and do not necessarily represent those of the host institutions or funders.

1 Project Summary

1.1 Background

Project 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”, explored the issues faced by businesses managing plant waste material. The project identified that often, waste piles are allowed to build up on sites (plant nurseries, gardens, parks, etc.) with no clear management plan for its disposal or future use. If not treated correctly, that material can become a source of plant pests and pathogens which can be inadvertently spread around the site and onwards to other sites, with particular risks where nursery stock is involved.

A best practice waste management guidance document was produced during PHC2021/02 to help organisations and businesses manage their plant waste effectively and reduce both the individual business risks, and the wider risks to Scotland’s plant health. However, Project PHC2021/02 identified that there were significant barriers to the uptake of better waste management practices, so an additional programme of knowledge exchange was funded by the Plant Health Centre and summarised in this report.

A key observation was that plant waste composted to BSI PAS100 (Publicly Available Specification for Composted Materials) standards can ensure that the resulting product is safe and reliable, however, there is a significant barrier to this best practice option as most plant production nurseries, large parks, and gardens do not produce enough waste to justify investing in a PAS100 system. These businesses and organisations therefore need to know what other options are available to them. The programme of KE and outreach activity was therefore designed to include this set of stakeholders.

One key route for the dissemination of best waste management practice was through organisation and businesses applying the Plant Health Management Standard (PHMS) via the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme, which required guidance for the management of plant waste. The inclusion of the PHC/02 best practice guidance in the scheme was an important achievement for the project. One objective in this additional programme of KE was the further promotion of that guidance to Plant Healthy members.

1.2 Plant Waste KE Project aims

- 1 Share best practice for waste management with those managing waste in plant nurseries, gardens, parks and other plant handling businesses.
- 2 Ensure the best practice guidance is available for those applying to become Plant Healthy certified.
- 3 Produce a peer-reviewed publication on plant waste management to ensure the broadest reach with plant health experts.

1.3 Events

Events were selected to engage with a broad range of stakeholders, in order to share the guidance produced during PHC2021/02 as widely as possible. The following events were selected:

- Plant Network Green Waste Management Day, Brodsworth Hall and Gardens, 26th April 2023. (Targeting those composting green waste)
- Scotland's Plant Health Conference 2023, Edinburgh, 1st June 2023 (Targeting key members of Scotland's plant health community).
- The Horticultural Trades Association (HTA) National Plant Show 2023, 20th & 21st June 2023, Stoneleigh, Coventry. (Targeting horticultural and nursery businesses)

1.4 Key outputs and observations

- The Plant Network Green Waste Management Day was hosted by English Heritage and attended by approximately 40 practitioners (gardeners, site managers, policy makers). The plant health risks and best practice findings of PHC2021/02 were presented and were received enthusiastically. The best practice guidance was circulated afterwards.
- The HTA National Plant Show is one of the largest UK horticultural trade shows with 1,100 visitors over two days. A joint stand was run with Plant Healthy, which enabled numerous plant waste management conversations with horticultural practitioners.
- The findings from PHC2021/02 were presented during both a talk and a poster session at Scotland's Plant Health Conference 2023 which prompted multiple conversations with stakeholders.



Knowledge exchange at the HTA National Plant Show.

- Peer-reviewed paper produced: Elliot, M., Green, S., Litterick, A., Yeomans, A. (In Press). Disease Risks from Plant Waste Management in the UK and Their Mitigation. CABI Plant Health Cases.

- Plant waste management best practice guidance published on the Plant Healthy website as a resource for those organisations and businesses who are applying to become certified or are already members <https://planthealthy.org.uk/resources/biosecurity-best-practice-for-safe-disposal-of-plant-waste-and-spent-growing-media>
- The guidance produced during PHC2021/02 has proved to be an invaluable resource for practitioners who are concerned about their waste management practices and need help to improve them.

Plant Health Centre
c/o The James Hutton Institute
Invergowrie,
Dundee, DD2 5DA

Tel: +44 (0)1382 568905

Email: Info@PlantHealthCentre.scot
Website: www.planthealthcentre.scot
Twitter: [@PlantHealthScot](https://twitter.com/PlantHealthScot)

