

PHC Bulletin Newsletter

Updating you on recent activities of the Plant Health Centre

Issue 19, May 2026

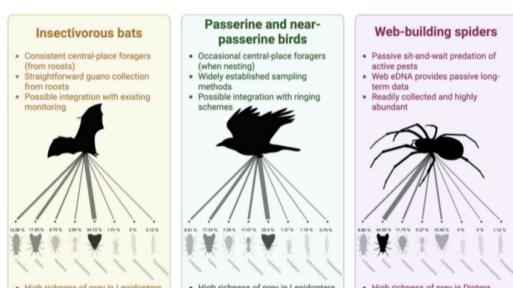
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Welcome to Issue 19

Scotland's Plant Health Conference 2026 will take place in Dundee at the **Apex City Quay Hotel on the 6th of October**. The event is co-organised with Scottish Government. Tickets can be found now on [Eventbrite](#). As always our conference is free to attend.

We are bringing you lots of recently published project reports in this issue of the newsletter. Our project researchers have been busy creating various tools for managing plant health in both the natural environment and in agriculture.

National Plant Health Week takes place between the 11-17th of May this year with International Plant Health Day on the 12th of May. To find out more about what is happening through the week check out the Plant Health Action [website](#)

As always, keep up to speed with Plant Health Centre news by following our page on [LinkedIn](#)

-Katherine O'Donnell Plant Health Centre Communication Officer

National Action Plan



At Scotland's Plant Health Conference 2025, a workshop was held on the UK Pesticide National Action Plan.

The workshop was co-organised with Scottish Government and provided an opportunity to gather expert perspectives on how to support delivery of the National action Plan and explore ways in which PHC projects can complement the Plan and opportunities for increasing the uptake of Integrated Pest Management approaches in all of Scotland's plant-based sectors; including Horticulture, Amenity, Natural Environment, Forestry and Agriculture.

A report summarising stakeholders' input submitted on the day has been [published](#)

Publications



Since our last newsletter we have published 6 reports. We are thankful to all our project teams for delivering such high quality of work.

Developing resources for appropriate plant biosecurity assessments and implementation in natural habitats

This project created a practical tool to help users systematically assess biosecurity risks before undertaking work in natural habitats. The Plant Health Biosecurity Plan was developed in collaboration with statutory bodies, land managers, and conservation practitioners.

Project recommendations

- The Plant Health Biosecurity Plan is designed to be utilised by those working in the natural environment
- The PHBP should be part of the application process for funding for work in the natural environment. Those funding work in the natural environment should consider incorporating the PHBP as a mandatory step in their application process.

[Read the Report](#)

Evaluating the potential of predator diet analysis as a monitoring tool for plant pests of concern

This project was tasked with assessing whether molecular analysis of predator diets could contribute to plant pest monitoring, with a focus on forestry and relevance to a Scottish context was undertaken. Results suggest predator diet metabarcoding can detect plant pest species and reveal pest–predator interactions that are difficult to capture using conventional trapping methods.

Project recommendations

- Validation of the approach in a Scottish forest context.
- This method has the potential to be scaled up to provide a cost-effective monitoring system

[Read the Report](#)

Improved preparedness for *Phytophthora* prevention in Scotland

This project strengthened Scotland's preparedness for current and emerging *Phytophthora* threats through improved horizon-scanning, risk assessment and decision-support tools. Key outputs included a ranked list of threats to priority Scottish plants and habitats, and spatial risk models for high-risk species such as *P. ramorum*, *P. ×alni* and *P. pinifolia*.

Project recommendations

- Retain *Phytophthora* as a priority within the UK Plant Health Risk Register
- Develop tailored risk and prioritisation tools for Scotland that exploit existing knowledge and data sources
- Adopt an approach of assessing and scoring *Phytophthora* risks among species and locations

[Read the Report](#)

European Mountain Ash ringspot associated virus – a rapid review of the wider threat to Scotland

This rapid review was delivered by our Impact officers Lisa Ward and Matt Elliot, in response to an apparent recent increase in reports of virus symptoms. The review concluded that European mountain ash ringspot-associated virus (EMARaV) is established and likely widespread in Scotland and elsewhere in Great Britain. It has likely been present in the UK for several decades and infects Rosaceous hosts.

Project recommendations

- EMARaV does not represent an emerging or escalating threat in Scotland
- Continued surveillance and reporting suspected cases

[Read the Report](#)

GI Base 2.0: Database of Scotland's Green Infrastructure plants

GIBase 2.0 provides an updated picture of the plant species used across major Green Infrastructure projects in Scotland, based on 126 planning applications from 24 local authorities

Project recommendations

- A Biosecurity Management Plan should be developed for construction projects
- The developed Mitigated Risk Rating for plant genera and species so that we can make informed biosecurity choices

[Read the Report](#)

Developing an assessment framework to identify plant health benefits and risks for emerging novel crops in Scotland

Addressing a current gap in the risk assessment for novel crops (such as hemp, flax and beet) this study created a robust framework to evaluate both the plant health risks and benefits of novel crops.

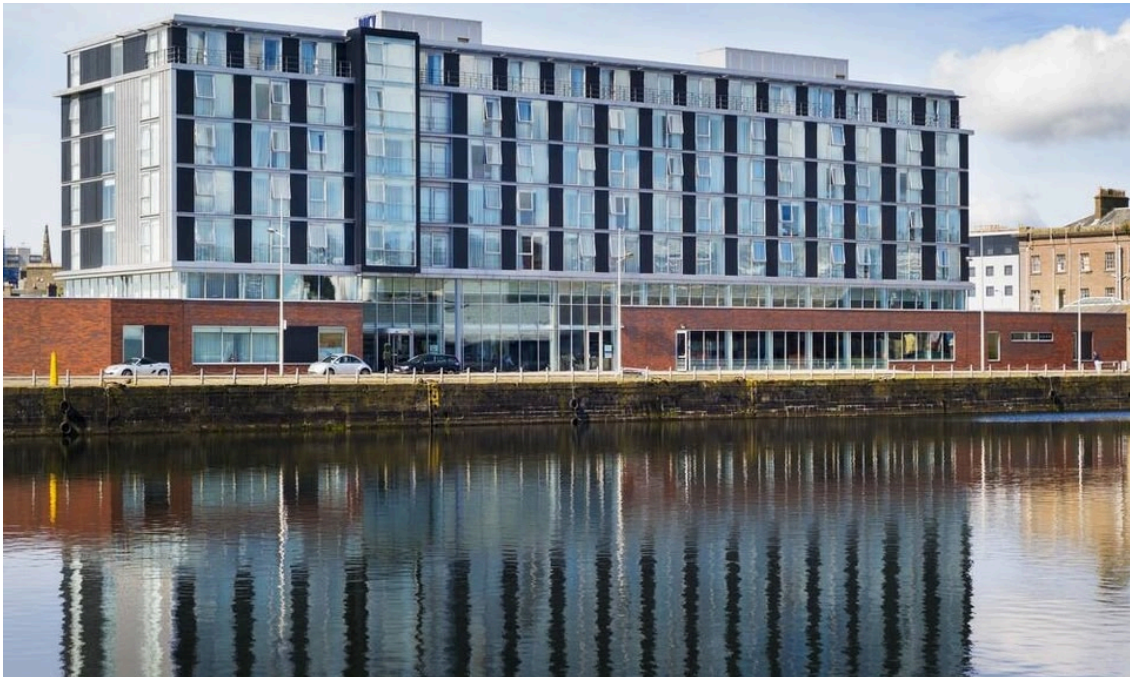
Project recommendations

- Advocate for using the framework in agricultural decision-making to de-risk crop diversification.
- Ensure the framework is kept up to date with emerging pest and climate data

[Read the Report](#)

All PHC publications can be viewed on our [website](#) and also on the Zenodo [Scottish Plant Health Community](#)

Events



Scotland's Plant Health Conference 2026

Tickets for the 2026 conference are now available at [Eventbrite](#)

[Get your ticket here](#)

The conference is an annual one-day event that brings together government, researchers, industry, land managers, growers, and environmental stakeholders to discuss how to protect Scotland's plants, trees, crops, and natural habitats from pests, diseases, and wider biosecurity threats. It is jointly delivered by the Plant Health Centre and the Scottish Government, with support from organisations including NatureScot, Scottish Forestry, and the Horticultural Trades Association.

Webinar

The Future of Plant Health Science, as part of [National Plant Health Week](#).

Through a series of short, focused talks, the session will cover key topics including biosecurity and surveillance, the changing policy landscape, and innovations in diagnostics and detection. Speakers will also highlight the critical gaps and opportunities shaping the future of the field.

Speakers:

- Neil Boonham (Fera)
- Matt Elliot (Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh)
- David Kenyon (Chief Plant Health Officer for Scotland)
- Helen Anderson (DEFRA)

Register now> [Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams](#)



Scottish Government Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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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