

## Chalara Dieback of Ash – *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*



Chalara dieback of ash is a disease of ash trees caused by a fungus called *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*. It is particularly pathogenic to European ash, *fraxinus excelsior*.

### Impact

Chalara has the potential to cause significant damage to the UK's ash population. It has already caused widespread damage to ash populations in continental Europe. It can kill young ash trees quite quickly. Older trees can resist infection for some time until prolonged exposure, or an attack from a secondary pest or pathogen, eventually causes the tree to succumb.

UK scientists have identified the country's first ash tree that shows tolerance to ash dieback, raising the possibility of using selective breeding to develop strains of trees that are tolerant to the disease.

## Symptoms Guide: Chalara Dieback of Ash



### Crown dieback

Dead or dying tops of infected trees are most obvious during the summer. Sudden foliar collapse may occur as stems and branches are girdled.

(Photo: Ben Jones, Forestry Commission)



### Leaf collapse

Wilting and collapsed leaves are most visible in spring and early summer.

### Lesions and cankers

Lesions and cankers on stems, branches and shoots are visible throughout the year. Often the lesions are diamond shaped, sunken and with uneven edges, although the appearance can vary.



### Compartmentalised cankers

Some cankers may appear dry and cracked and there may be evidence of the tree compartmentalising the infection.



### Leaf dieback

The dieback of leaves with brown or sometimes black leaf stalks can be most easily seen throughout summer.



### Blackened rachis

Between June and October the black toughened rachises (leaf stalks) can be found in amongst the leaf litter. You may also see the tiny white trumpet shaped fruiting bodies that have emerged from the stalk.



**Don't give**  
pests and  
diseases  
an easy ride



If you think you have spotted a new case of this disease in a tree, then report it through the Forestry Commission's online Tree Alert form: [forestry.gov.uk/treelert](https://www.forestry.gov.uk/treelert)

Keep an eye on the condition of infected ash trees. You may need to prune or fell them if they threaten to fall and cause injury or damage.

You can help to slow the spread of the disease by practising good biosecurity.



### Think kit

Clean and disinfect tools, equipment, work boots and vehicle tyres before visiting another site.



### Think transport

Make sure that ash wood is free of soil and leaf material before being transported.



### Think trees

Where practical collect up and burn or compost fallen ash leaves on site. This will help to disrupt the life cycle of the pathogen.

For more details, please visit [www.forestry.gov.uk/ashdieback](https://www.forestry.gov.uk/ashdieback)