

Ash dieback reported in North West of England for the first time

The Woodland Trust (UK's leading woodland conservation Charity) has warned that ash dieback has been found in trees in the North West of England for the first time including its own land.



Ash dieback has spread to the North West Photo: ALAMY

Ash dieback is a disease of ash trees caused by a fungus called *Chalara fraxinea*. The disease causes leaf loss and crown dieback in affected trees and it may lead to tree death. Ash trees suffering from symptoms likely to be caused by *Chalara fraxinea* are increasingly being found across Europe. These have included forest trees, trees in urban areas (such as parks and gardens) and also young trees in nurseries. The disease has not yet been found in the natural environment in Britain although it was recently intercepted in a consignment of infected trees sent from a nursery in the Netherlands to a nursery in the south of England.



Ash dieback has been found in trees in the North West of England for the first time, the Forestry Commission has confirmed. Some 851 locations have been confirmed as having ash dieback. New sites have been found in Lancashire, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire. Cases have been found at the Woodland Trust's 200 year old Greendale Wood near Grindleton in Lancashire. "It's of huge concern to see these cases of ash dieback confirmed in the North West. We must continue to explore all the possibilities which may provide a future for our ash trees," said Austin Brady, Woodland Trust Director of Conservation and External Affairs. He further added that "The impacts of the disease in the short term are becoming clearer, though we have yet to see how much natural resistance exists within our native ash population".

Ash dieback, or *Chalara fraxinea*, was spotted in wild trees in Britain in 2012 and has the potential to wipe out the country's 80million trees. Ecologists have warned that the disease is now unstoppable and could wipe out 45 native species and endanger the habitats of nearly 1,000 others, ecologists have warned.

The Government has suggested finding resistant trees rather than trying to cure the disease. It would be very interesting to note that simple measures such as cleaning footwear in between visits can help prevent the spread of a number of tree diseases.

Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/wildlife>