

# Support for affected owners



Countryside Stewardship grants can offer help with the costs of:

- restocking (replanting) after felling to control Ramorum disease; and
- removing immature trees which cannot be felled economically, but which might spread the disease.

Owners who plan to apply for a grant must speak to a Forestry Commission woodland officer before starting work. Contact details are available at

[forestry.gov.uk/england-areas](http://forestry.gov.uk/england-areas)

Owners in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should contact Forestry Commission Scotland, Natural Resources Wales or the Northern Ireland Forest Service respectively.

## Reporting new cases

Report suspected symptoms promptly with Tree Alert.

[forestry.gov.uk/treelert](http://forestry.gov.uk/treelert)

If you are unable to use Tree Alert, report to  
Email: [tree\\_health\\_england@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tree_health_england@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)  
Tel: 0300 067 4000

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Please send any such requests to  
Email: [diversity@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:diversity@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)  
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[forestry.gov.uk/england](http://forestry.gov.uk/england)



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# Ramorum disease of larch

Advice and support for woodland owners and managers



[forestry.gov.uk/pramorur](http://forestry.gov.uk/pramorur)

# Ramorum disease



Ramorum disease is caused by the fungus-like pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum*.

It can infect and kill many tree species widely grown in England, particularly larch, sweet chestnut and beech. It also kills numerous ornamental shrub species, including *Rhododendron ponticum*, and ecologically important plants such as bilberry.

Branches and stems are often encrusted with dried, whitish resin

## What it does

Spores enter larch trees through the bark and needles, girdling branches and eventually the stem, causing foliage to turn ginger, then brown, before dying. As autumn nears, foliage can wilt and turn grey or black as spores are produced on the needles. Infected larch trees usually have resinous patches on the trunk and branches. They often die quickly, and symptoms can develop rapidly throughout a stand of trees over a single season.

## Why it matters

Spores from infected mature larch trees can be spread to nearby trees and plants, and be carried much further on moist air currents. There is also a high risk of spread to plants in other habitats, including susceptible heathland species such as bilberry. This is cause for concern economically, and from a landscape and biodiversity perspective.



## Symptoms

Look for:

- partial flushing of trees in the spring;
- unexplained dieback and gingering foliage in the canopy (see cover picture);
- ginger foliage later turning brown;
- bark cankers on branches or the main stem, which are often encrusted with resin; and
- shoot tips wilting and turning black or grey, becoming visible towards autumn.

Nb: It is often difficult to spot symptoms in tall trees, and they might have other causes, so expert advice can be needed.

Wilt and dieback of fresh needle growth symptomatic of sporulating material.



## What to do about it

Please report any suspicious symptoms immediately. (See back for reporting details). This will enable confirmation or otherwise of the disease by experts, who can also advise on the required course of action.

Logs from infected larch trees may only be moved to a processing mill by a licensed haulier.



## What happens next

You will be contacted by a Forestry Commission surveyor to arrange a site assessment. This usually involves felling a sample tree or trees to investigate and take samples to confirm whether they are infected. If infection is apparent, a woodland officer will visit to explain the action needed, which is most likely to involve felling the infected trees along with surrounding susceptible trees which are also likely to be infected. This is a legal requirement and will prevent or limit spread of the disease. The woodland officer will also explain any support available.

## Using the felled trees

Timber from affected trees can be utilised. However, the pathogen can still be active in the bark, so the timber may only be moved and processed under a Forestry Commission licence. This helps to ensure that biosecurity procedures are followed to minimise the risk of spreading the disease.

Nb: Firewood from a *P. ramorum*-affected site may only be supplied to retailers and end users by a Forestry Commission- authorised processor. It must be accompanied by information providing biosecurity advice.

Top: Infected pole-stage larch failing to flush in spring