

Phytophthora lateralis



Phytophthora lateralis

Phytophthora lateralis is a fungus-like organism causing serious plant disease. The main host for the disease is Lawson cypress, and the disease kills most of these trees it infects. The disease is mainly spread through spores in the soil or water which infect the tree roots. The infection kills the roots and can extend up the trunk of the affected tree, girdle it, and lead to the tree's death.

Phytophthora lateralis was confirmed for the first time in Northern Ireland in Summer 2011 and at the moment the spread of the disease is limited here.

In order to prevent the spread of this serious disease, please adhere to the following guidance when dealing with infected trees.

- Follow the biosecurity requirements on the following pages, which outline how you should clean and disinfect equipment, footwear and tools used during the handling of the infected trees. **Please note that moving contaminated soil poses the greatest risk of spreading this disease.** If you are using a contractor to remove the infected tree(s) please ensure you give them the biosecurity guidance to follow.
- As the disease can be present in the lower parts of the tree and the surrounding soil, the lower trunk(s) should be disposed of by burning (to a height of 1 metre). Make sure soil is not moved from this area or carried elsewhere on footwear/tools/machinery and equipment. All footwear, tools and equipment should be cleaned and then disinfected with Propellar or Cleankill or other disinfectant approved for use against *Phytophthora*.
- Once the tree has been removed, grass over and don't replant with woody plants within a 3 metre radius.

Precautions against spreading *Phytophthora lateralis*

Phytophthora lateralis is a fungus-like organism that causes a disease that primarily affects Lawson cypress but can also infect other trees including other *Chamaecyparis* species and Pacific Yew (*Taxus brevifolia*). Mild winters and wet summers increase the risk of the disease spreading.

In this current *Phytophthora lateralis* outbreak on Lawson cypress trees, ways in which the spores of the disease can be spread are...

- Movement of contaminated soil, stuck to footwear, clothing, timber, vehicles and equipment
- Movement of infected plant parts (the lowest parts of the tree)

We can't do much about the weather but we must do all we can to reduce the risk of carrying the spores around with us within and between woodlands. **Contaminated soil is the primary risk, especially if wet.**

This guide sets out a number of **simple precautions that must be taken** on any known *Phytophthora lateralis* control area. The aim of these precautions is primarily to prevent the transfer of soil on people, vehicles and bark.

Footwear

The main precaution is for everyone to ensure that footwear is first cleaned of all soil, and then disinfected before entering or leaving a control area. **The use of wellington boots will assist with this.**

Before entering a *Phytophthora lateralis* control area...

- **Footwear must be clean and free from soil and plant debris. The footwear should be sprayed with Propellar™ or Cleankill™ and left until it has evaporated.**

Before leaving a *Phytophthora lateralis* control area...

- Footwear must be washed off on a hard standing near the entrance to the wood using a stiff brush and water. It is essential that all traces of soil be removed.
- The brush used for this must be disinfected before and after use.
- After cleaning, footwear must be sprayed with Propellar™ or Cleankill™ or other approved disinfectant and left until it has evaporated.
- Care must be taken to ensure that any water run-off does not enter watercourses.

Broad-spectrum farm disinfectants are not effective against *Phytophthora*.

Tools

Hand tools and motorised tools used on infected sites for cutting and digging may become contaminated.

- If any work (e.g. pruning) is to be carried out on an uninfected tree or shrub on a *Phytophthora* control

site, tools must be disinfected or 'flamed' before being used.

Before leaving a *Phytophthora lateralis* control area...

- Chainsaw bars, chains and side covers must be removed and cleaned as thoroughly as possible to remove debris. Where it is appropriate and safe to do so, Propellar™ or Cleankill™ disinfectant may be applied and left to evaporate.
- Other hand tools and equipment such as tapes, cant hooks, wedges, fuel cans, tools and toolboxes must be cleaned off and surfaces brushed with disinfectant before being moved to another site.

Vehicles, machinery and equipment

Special care should be taken to ensure that vehicles are as free of soil before leaving any *Phytophthora* control area.

Before entering a *Phytophthora lateralis* control area...

- Consider whether the vehicle needs to enter the site at all. If you can, park off site and walk in.
- Share vehicles wherever possible to reduce the number of vehicles that need to enter the site.
- When on site, road vehicles should stay on stone roads wherever possible and be parked in areas that are as free of soil as possible. In particular avoid driving or parking on or close to felling areas.

Before leaving a *Phytophthora lateralis* control area...

Off-road vehicles

- Machines, plant and any road vehicles that have been driven off hard surfaced roads onto an infected

site must be cleaned on a hard standing beside a surfaced forest or public road. A pressure washer should be used, preferably one that uses hot water or steam. Care must be taken to ensure that any water run-off does not enter watercourses.

- This cleaning should focus on removing as much mud as possible focusing on tyres, wheels, mud flaps, sills, wheel arches, guarded areas and anywhere else where mud and needle debris may have accumulated. Cab floors and pedals should also be checked and cleaned.
- After cleaning, tyres should be disinfected with Propellar™ or Cleankill™ or other disinfectant approved for use against *Phytophthora*.

Road Vehicles

- Haulage vehicles and other road vehicles that stay on stone surfaced roads may require a sweep down to remove loose soil before leaving the site. This is especially important in wet weather.
- **The drier and cleaner the road surface is, the less the risk of transferring the disease on wheels will be.** If surfaced forest roads and loading bays become muddy or covered with bark and debris, they should be scraped off and the surface stoned before continuing use.

Disinfectants are NOT effective on soiled surfaces

Stacking considerations

Picking up soil when handling and bringing wood from control sites to roadside is a major issue in these control procedures.

When working with timber on a *Phytophthora lateralis* control area...

- Avoid placing timber back on the ground especially in muddy conditions. Stack logs on bearers where it is safe and possible to do so.
- Minimise the accidental pick up of soil when moving timber in the wood and at roadside
- Stacked logs from control sites must not be placed in contact with live plants and foliage of other potentially susceptible trees and plants. Clear a stacking site first as necessary.
- Follow H&S guidance on stack height, stability and signage.
- Try to arrange loading sites to avoid forwarders travelling on the same route as road lorries as much as possible (e.g. forwarders only travel behind the stacks and not on the road itself).

Keep stacking and loading sites organised and clean

**If you have any further queries please contact
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