

# HIGH PEAK TREE ADVICE NOTE

## ASH DIEBACK DISEASE

### Ash Dieback what is it ?

It is a fungus which originated in Asia. Its introduction to Europe about 30 years ago has devastated the European ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) because our native ash species did not evolve with the fungus and this means it has no natural defence against it. Note it does not affect rowans also known as mountain Ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*)

### What happens to the tree ?

The fungus overwinters in leaf litter on the ground then release spores into the surrounding atmosphere during the summer.

These spores can be carried by the wind many miles away. They land on leaves, stick to and the fungus then grows inside the tree, eventually blocking its water transport systems, causing it to die.

The tree can fight back, but year-on-year infections will eventually kill it. Young trees are more likely to die quicker than mature trees.

### What does Ash Dieback Look Like?

There are several symptoms they are not all always be present

1. Lesions on the stems
2. Browning of the leaves and early leaf fall
3. Retaining their seeds or 'Keys' over the winter



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4 The foliage in the crown of the tree gradually thins as the disease progresses

**Tree 1** - is an ash with healthy Crown

**Tree 2** – is an ash showing the initial signs of the disease with around 25% crown loss



**Tree 3** - with more advanced crown decline between 50% and 75%.



**Tree 4** - final stages of Ash dieback with over 75% crown loss

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### What do you do if you suspect a tree has Ash Dieback ?

#### On your land ?

Current advice from the Forestry Commission is that there is nothing that you can do about the disease if you discover it on a tree. If the disease progresses to the later stages, then you will need to prune or fell it if the tree is in an area where it could be a hazard.

You should not fell a tree just because it has the disease, as some trees may prove to be resistant. Also ash are important for wildlife and many species are dependent on them. Mature trees in particular can live with the disease for many years providing a habitat for these species.

Before you do any work to the tree you must check whether it is a protected tree by a

Tree Preservation Order or whether you are in a Conservation Area on the online interactive planning map :

<https://www.highpeak.gov.uk/hp/council-services/planning-and-buildings/interactive-planning-map>

If the tree is protected you will need to apply to do works to the tree

If you have a lot of trees you may need a Felling License. Link to more information:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-felling-licence-when-you-need-to-apply>

#### On Council land ?

Please report any suspected case by emailing [Trees@highpeak.gov.uk](mailto:Trees@highpeak.gov.uk) and giving details about the location of the tree and if possible photo. If you report a tree we will inspect it unless it has been recently visited as part of our online monitoring system. Works to the tree will only be undertaken if warranted and it may be that we decide to continue monitor the condition of the trees.

#### Replacement planting

Ash make up an estimated 14% of all trees in the High Peak area and it is anticipated that between 50% and 90% of all ash tree will be infected and lost within 10 years. That is a lot of trees. Therefore planting more trees is important. Tree planting advice and the benefits of trees are covered in other Tree Advice Notes.

The woodland trust supplies trees to community groups

<https://woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/>

#### Other sources of information

- <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/tree-pests-and-diseases/key-tree-pests-and-diseases/ash-dieback/>
- <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=779>
- <https://www.observatree.org.uk/portal/ash-dieback/>