

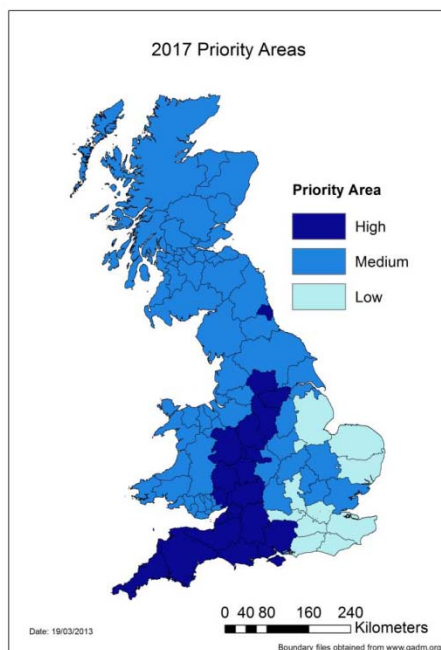
Chalara Control Plan Update

March 2013

The updated Chalara control plan outlines a £1.5 million research project to investigate Chalara resistant strains of ash. 250,000 young ash saplings will be planted across sites in the south east and monitored for resistance to the disease. The Government will also commission research to investigate genetic resistance in a laboratory setting.

Chalara is an airborne disease which cannot be stopped but with good management the spread of the disease could be slowed. Modelling work undertaken by the University of Cambridge has helped to identify priority areas (shown as dark blue on the map below) where mitigation work to slow the spread of the disease will be most effective.

If recently planted sites are a major contributor to further disease spread then removal of these sites in the priority areas should delay the progress of the disease. Any tracing of infected trees will now also focus on these high priority areas and should be completed by July 2013.



Young or recently planted ash

The Government and many stakeholders believe there is value in removing as many recently planted ash trees (i.e. planted within approximately the last five years) as possible and replanting these with alternative species.

The Government believes that, over time, landowners and woodland managers would generally wish to replace any young ash and that supporting replanting is a cost-effective way to achieve the objective of removing infected young ash and ensuring minimal loss of woodland cover.

Therefore, in England, for sites where planting of ash woodland has been funded under the Rural Development Programme for England via the English Woodland Grant Scheme the Government will:

- Provide grant aid to landowners to fund the removal and disposal of recently-planted infected trees in higher priority areas (see Map). This is intended to help slow the spread of Chalara from those areas in the East of England, where it is well-established in the wider environment, to the west of the country.
- Provide grant funding throughout England to support replanting of sites of recently-planted infected ash trees with other species. The Government expect much of this replanting to be completed next winter wherever possible.

- Actively explore a similar approach for ash trees planted under Higher Level Stewardship, to further our strategy of focussing our resources on securing those woodlands already funded by Defra

The FC will provide guidance on cost-effective options for removal, disposal and replanting by the end of April 2013.

Mature ash trees

The Government will not be encouraging the felling of mature ash trees in either urban or rural situations. Even if these trees are infected with Chalara they may take many years to die. The retention of mature ash maximises the potential for regeneration of a new population of disease resistant trees. Dead and decaying wood is also beneficial for some wildlife species that depend on ash. Veteran, ancient mature trees are also important components of a resilient woodland or landscape.

Any removal of mature uninfected ash should be phased to ensure it is retained for as long as possible, particularly at high value sites, as this would have the potential to reduce its timber value and have a disruptive effect on landscape, wildlife and woodland habitats.

Chemical treatments

The process to evaluate the possible usefulness of various chemical treatments against Chalara, submitted by a number of producers has progressed. Fourteen of the treatments submitted for scientific analysis are being taken forward for laboratory testing. These are a mixture of products; some may be effective on live trees and others on leaf litter. These products need to be tested to ensure they do not adversely affect other wildlife or human health and investigated as to how they might be used.

Resilience & monitoring

The Government aims to work with stakeholders over the next 12 months to promote the economic and environmental resilience of woodlands by reducing the spread of the disease and by producing and establishing more resistant populations of ash. The Forestry Commission and the Food and Environment Research Agency will also work with landowners, industry and the public to monitor tree health via initiatives such as ObservaTree and OPAL.

Movement Ban

A Plant Health Order 2012 prohibiting all imports of ash seeds, plants and trees into Great Britain, and all movement of ash seeds, plants and trees within Great Britain, was introduced by the UK Parliament on 30 October 2012 to prevent further spread of the disease. **The movement ban has been reviewed and remains in place.**

The new updated management plan can be found here: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara>

A next version of the Chalara Management Plan will be published March 2014