Xylella fastidiosa

HOST: ELM
(Ulmus species)

What is Xylella fastidiosa and why is it so serious?

◆ A dangerous bacterium threatening hundreds of species of plants in the UK
◆ It is spreading across southern Europe from its origins in the Americas
◆ Can be transported by sap-feeding insects such as spittlebugs
◆ Causes plant death by blocking water transporting vessels (xylem)
◆ Currently no cure

Ulmus spp.

◆ Deciduous trees, largely restricted to hedgerows because of Dutch Elm Disease
◆ Elliptic or ovate leaves which are rough to the touch on the top surface
◆ Leaf bases asymmetric on either side of petiole
◆ Twigs can develop unusual corky growth along their lengths
◆ Flowers pink/red/purple and occur in tassels or clusters before the leaves appear in early spring
◆ Winged fruits develop from the flowers

What is BRIGIT?

A collaborative project aimed at reducing the risk of a Xylella introduction into the UK and mitigating the risks in the event of an outbreak. Please turn over to find out more.
What to look out for

- Leaf scorch and death of tissue at leaf margins (but not usually along main leaf veins)
- Distinct yellow demarcation between healthy and unhealthy leaf tissue
- Patches of chlorotic (yellowing) tissue may be seen on leaves as tissue dies. Dead leaf margins often curl inwards
- Discoloration of foliage and dieback of twigs and branches in the crown

Where is the plant from?

- Plants sourced from infected countries are at a much higher risk of carrying the disease-causing bacterium

Do not panic!

There are other reasons for disease symptoms to appear. Consider if the plant is under stress from:

- Root or stem damage
- Drought
- Hot weather
- Frost
- Nutrient imbalance

How to report Xylella fastidiosa

Collect together all available details including the host plant name, symptoms, origin, and import history and report your suspicions on TreeAlert at: bit.ly/210rwfq

Please DO NOT send plant samples to the RHS.

More information on BRIGIT and Xylella can be found at: bit.ly/2UZCV1E

Information on the government’s response to Xylella and other pests and diseases can be found on the UK Plant Health Information Portal at: planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk

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