

***Phytophthora ramorum* update – Scotland.** *Phytophthora ramorum*, cause of ramorum disease of larch, has been spreading in Scotland over the last decade. Surveys using helicopters and ground teams followed by statutory felling of affected trees have been used to slow the spread of the disease. Infections have generally been restricted to isolated trees or small groups of trees, particularly in the south and west of Scotland. Significant levels of infection detected in SW Scotland in 2013 resulted in the formation of a management zone where statutory control actions are no longer pursued. In 2018 and 2019 significant areas of new infection were observed in areas up to 50 km (31 mi.) from the edge of the management zone, principally in areas where low level infections had been detected in previous years and in areas known to be climatically suitable. Scale of statutory felling actions required in some areas has been considerable but largely compliance has been good.



Larch plantation infected with *P. ramorum* in Argyll, Scotland. Photo:

Summary of significant recent findings

Findings from aerial surveillance in 2020 (Helicopter program delayed and run at reduced capacity due to COVID-19) and returns from field surveys have identified concerning areas of new infection on larch in areas of the south and west of Scotland where the climate is known to be suitable for the spread of the disease and infections have been detected in previous years. Large scale spread of the disease has been detected in areas of Kintyre, Argyll, Mull, Cowal, Arran and the western Scottish Borders; some of these areas have had only limited infections historically.

Statutory Plant Health Notices have been issued where necessary to control further spread, and a review is underway to ensure capacity in the sector is best targeted to control further spread and to retain larch as a viable forestry option in parts of Scotland that are less climatically suitable for *P. ramorum* infection on larch.

For more information see [Scottish Forestry - Phytophthora ramorum in Scotland](#) or contact Paddy Robertson, Scottish Forestry, patrick.robertson@forestry.gov.scot.

Photo courtesy of Paddy Robertson, Scottish Forestry.