

Pests and Diseases update

1. Phytophthora pluvialis is presently known to affect a variety of trees including western hemlock, tanoak, Douglas fir and various pines. It was first reported from Oregon, USA in 2013 on tanoak (*Lithocarpus densiflorus*) and Douglas fir and has been shown to be the causative pathogen in 'red needle cast' in radiata pine in NZ. It also causes shoot die back and lesions on stems, branches and roots.

It wasn't seen in the U.K. until September 2021 in a Cornish woodland where it was found to be affecting mature western hemlock and Douglas fir. Further outbreaks have been found in Cornwall, Devon, Cumbria and near Loch Carron in Scotland. Wales reported their first outbreak in Dec2021.

Many members in our society will grow conifers so this fairly recent pathogen must be of concern. We have also seen how other *Phytophtheras* (*ramorum* and *kernoviae*) affect a wide range of hosts including the genus *Rhododendron*.

Growers are asked to be alert to this disease and report any concerns via The TreeAlert online portal. *Phytophthora pluvialis* currently meets the criteria to be classified as a GB Quarantine pest for regulatory purposes.

I asked RBGE outstation, Benmore about this phytophthora and in particular the level of concern about it. The view was that it was going to have to be watched carefully and that rhododendrons might well be at future risk.

2. Of less concern to us is a new Stink Bug originating from China and Japan. This has been highlighted by the RHS. The brown marmorated stink bug, Halyomorpha halys spread to the USA in the 1990s and is now found in various European countries. So far only adults have been discovered in the UK and no breeding populations. They differ from native stink bugs with pale bands on the antennae, a row of pale dots on the body and a rectangular head. They appear to overwinter in houses. The main threat is to orchards where a small number can cause great damage. Gardeners are asked to watch for them. If you find them, capture them and report suspects to bmsb@niab.com or via the RHS gardening advice service rhs.org.uk/myadvice

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