

20th November 2017

Re: *Xylella fastidiosa*

A Chara,

Xylella fastidiosa is a pathogenic bacterium that infects the xylem tissues of a wide range of plants. In 2013 *Xylella fastidiosa* was recorded in Italy, which was the first finding of this pathogen in Europe. Since then it has been found in Corsica, France, Germany, Balearic Islands and Spain. It has a very wide host range and is of great concern for the EU, as so many of the host plants are present here. Our best defence against this pathogen is to prevent its arrival into Ireland.

Xylella fastidiosa represents a very serious threat for Ireland. If *Xylella fastidiosa* is found on your premises it will severely restrict your sales for between 1 to 5 years. To date, the disease has not been found in Ireland, nor on traded nursery stock in the EU. I would encourage you to work with us and keep the pathogen out of Ireland. When you are importing plant material it is advisable to :

1. Use reputable suppliers.
2. Seek guarantees from your supplier in relation to the health status of the plants.
3. Know where the plants originated from.
4. Make sure that the plant material has valid plant passports.

Ireland has a strong, viable nursery sector and it is important that we retain its viability into the future. If you need clarification of your responsibilities in relation to *Xylella fastidiosa* or if you have concerns and want to have a batch of plants tested for the pathogen, please contact myself or your local Department of Agriculture officer. Remember that it is much easier to deal with an interception of this pathogen after recent arrival on your premise rather than an outbreak subsequently.

The European Commission has implemented emergency measures to prevent the introduction and spread of the pathogen within the EU. Under these measures:

- On finding the pathogen, an infected zone is established and all host plants and vectors within 100 m of the diseased plant are destroyed. A buffer zone, at least 5 km in width, surrounding the infected zone is set for 5 years, where movement of host plants is strictly controlled.
- Under certain conditions, which would guarantee that no further spread of the disease has occurred, the buffer zone may be reduced to a width of at least 1km around the infected zone and be maintained for at least 1 year.

- All host plants must be grown in sites subject to annual official inspections and require plant passports.
- Plants for planting of *Coffea*, *Lavandula dentate*, *Nerium oleander*, *Olea europaea*, *Polygala myrtifolia* and *Prunus dulcis* shall only be moved if they are grown in a site that is subject to annual inspection, sampling and testing.

The list of host plants can be found on the EU Commissions database, follow the link below:

https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/plant/docs/ph_biosec_legis_emergency_db-host-plants_update09.pdf

Please consult our website for updates:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/farmingsectors/planthealthtrade/>

If we are all vigilant and work together we can keep this pathogen out of Ireland.

Yours sincerely,



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