

IPSN NEWSLETTER



IPSN

International Plant
Sentinel Network



JULY 2026



IPSN UK network Summer meeting



More than 20 participants
from 13 organisations



IPSN Small Grant projects
outcomes presented



IPSN Resources & activities updates

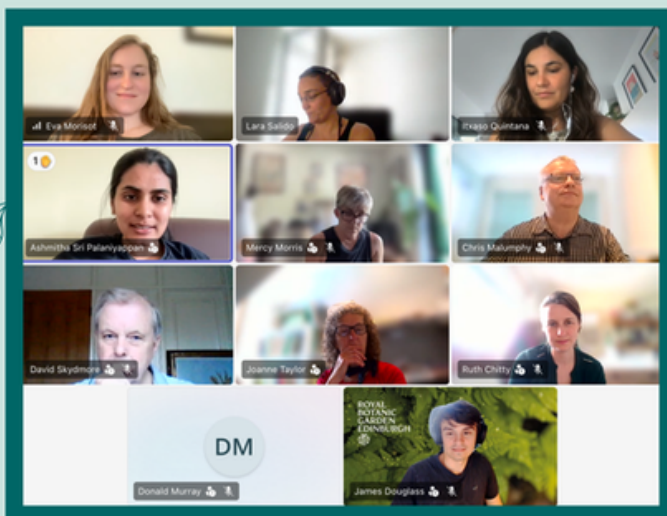


New plant health surveillance &
biosecurity initiatives launched:

- Hawthorn surveillance
- Beech trees surveillance
- Biosecurity Pathways Risk Analysis Tool



Join us for the autumn in person IPSN UK meeting!



IPSN
International Plant
Sentinel Network

TOP NEWS!

2026 IPSN UK Members Summer Meeting

22 members and partners from 13 botanic gardens, plant health and research institutions, and government organisations across the UK came together online on the last Monday of June for the IPSN UK Network Summer Meeting.

The meeting was an excellent opportunity to hear about the **outcomes of the 2025-2026 Small Grant projects**, receive an **update on the new IPSN resources**, and learn about the **activities planned for the year ahead**. A key highlight was the launch of new collaborative initiatives.

We are calling on botanic gardens and arboreta to participate in new surveillance programmes for hawthorn and beech species within their living collections. Members can also contribute to the co-development and pilot testing of an improved Biosecurity Pathway Risk Analysis (BPRA) tool.

The meeting ended with an open discussion on the network's future priorities. Members highlighted areas where the IPSN can provide further support, including training, resources, and surveillance activities. Planning is already underway for the autumn in-person meeting, which is expected to include a training workshop.



[Read about the event here](#)

IPSN UPDATES

»»» RESOURCES

Outreach Resource Kit

New biosecurity resources available in Spanish

As part of the EU-funded Bexyl Project, the IPSN and its collaborator IAS-CSIC developed a **suite of educational resources** that **help botanic gardens communicate the importance of biosecurity** and **raise awareness about *Xylella fastidiosa***.

The resource kit provides ready-to-use materials for exhibitions, workshops, educational programmes, and visitor engagement activities. It includes:

- Infographic carousels for awareness campaigns, social media, and educational outreach.
- Educational guides for activities to explain how *Xylella fastidiosa* spreads.
- Informative panels for creating biosecurity and plant health learning trails in botanic gardens.
- Presentations on biosecurity and *Xylella fastidiosa*, adapted for different audiences.

Please note: these resources are **currently available in Spanish only**.

We encourage you to register, download the materials, and use them in your activities. Share your experiences on social media and help spread awareness by tagging [#BeXylProject](#), [@REA_research](#), and [@BeXylP](#).



Access the resources here



Educational resource kit

Use them Share them

Help promote the role of botanical gardens
and raise awareness about *Xylella fastidiosa*

Access free resources designed for different audiences and formats
(social media, information boards, educational activities, presentations, etc.)

1 Download

2 Use them in your facilities, social media

3 Take a photo

4 Share on your social media:

Always use: [#BeXylProject](#) [@REA_research](#) [@BeXylproject](#)

Plant Health Monitoring Protocols

New monitoring protocols launched

The IPSN has developed a **range of practical, step-by-step protocols** to support botanic garden staff and volunteers in **monitoring priority tree pests and diseases**. While developed in the UK, these protocols were designed to be adaptable for use in botanic gardens worldwide. The latest protocols include:

- **Holm oak (*Quercus ilex*):**

This [monitoring_protocol](#) provides **step-by-step guidance for monitoring holm oaks**, with a focus on the visual identification of three priority pests of concern.

- **Canker stain of plane (*Ceratocystis platani*):**

Following two successful years of passive spore trapping for the canker stain of plane, the IPSN has updated the [sampling_protocol](#) based on participant feedback. The revised guide includes **clearer instructions for constructing and deploying spore traps**, a **comprehensive list of required materials**, and a **visitor-facing sign** that can be displayed alongside traps to raise awareness among garden visitors.



Plant Health Guides

New photography and sampling guides accessible

A decade ago, the IPSN produced a [series of practical guides and manuals](#) tailored for botanic garden staff and volunteers and designed to **strengthen diagnostic and surveillance capabilities**.

Recently updated, these resources cover various topics, including best practices for **Taking Photographs for Diagnostic Purposes** (accessible in both **English** and **French**). Clear and accessible, the materials help staff develop the knowledge and skills required to improve the stewardship of plant collections.

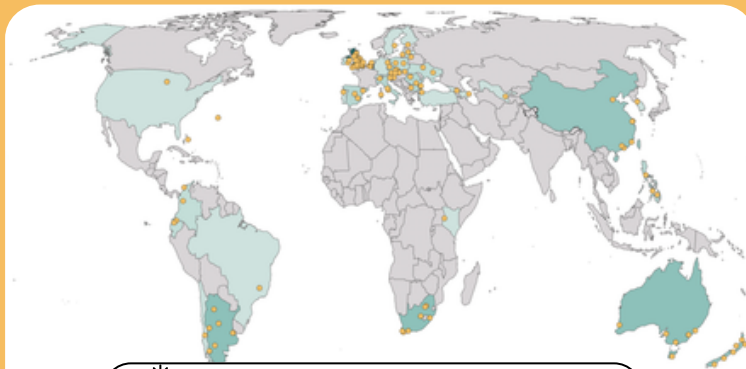




120+ MEMBERS WORLDWIDE

A warm welcome to our newest member from:

- [Botanical Garden of the University of Porto, Portugal](#)



[View our members' map](#)



NEW LINKEDIN GROUP

We are delighted to announce the launch of the **International Plant Sentinel Network (IPSN) LinkedIn Group**. This is a new online space for IPSN members, partners, and collaborators to connect, share ideas, and strengthen collaboration across our global network. It will complement our existing IPSN LinkedIn page, email list, and newsletters by providing an informal forum for participants to engage throughout the year.

Whether you would like to discuss emerging plant health threats, seek advice, share experiences, highlight new research, or promote events and training opportunities, this community is designed to facilitate meaningful conversations and knowledge exchange. As the IPSN grows, we hope this group will become a vibrant hub for sharing practical experiences, fostering new collaborations, and spurring action to improve plant biosecurity worldwide.

As we will keep this group private initially, we warmly encourage all IPSN members and partners to **locate the group using the LinkedIn search bar or through a direct link, then click Request to join**. Once added to the group, you will get the opportunity to introduce yourself and help shape this new community by sharing news, asking questions, and contributing to discussions. Everyone is welcome — the more voices and experiences we bring together, the stronger our network will become.



[View our LinkedIn group](#)



Updated Terms of Reference for Members & Partners

We are pleased to share **updated Terms of Reference (ToRs) for our botanic garden and arboretum members** (in [English](#), [French](#), and [Spanish](#)), reflecting the evolving priorities of the network. Alongside this, we have introduced **new Terms of Reference specifically for non-garden partners** (in [English](#), [French](#), and [Spanish](#)), formalising how organisations without botanic garden or arboretum status can engage with and contribute to IPSN initiatives.

These updates aim to provide clarity on expectations and opportunities for involvement.

Plant health risks continue to evolve as trade, travel, climate change, and changing environmental conditions create new opportunities for pests and pathogens to establish and spread. Botanic gardens and arboreta, with their diverse living collections and extensive plant exchange networks, are uniquely positioned to contribute to early detection and awareness. Early detection and prompt reporting remain essential to reducing the impact of emerging plant health threats.

Below are six emerging pests and diseases currently highlighted by international plant health organisations and surveillance networks that may be relevant to living collections:

1. The Japanese beetle (*Popillia japonica*)

This highly polyphagous pest feeds on more than 300 plant species, including fruit trees, grapevines, roses, ornamental shrubs, and herbaceous plants. It is listed as a priority quarantine pest in Europe, where it continues to expand its range, notably reaching northern Italy.

Adults feed on foliage, flowers, and fruit, while larvae feed on grass roots, affecting lawns and turf areas.

Look for:

- Metallic green beetles with copper-brown wing covers
- Characteristic skeletonised leaves
- Ragged feeding damage on flowers and fruit
- Large numbers of beetles congregating on host plants

Key actions:

- Monitor susceptible plants during summer months
- Familiarise staff with identification features
- Report any suspect detections outside known distribution areas
- Follow local guidance on trapping and management



Photo by University of Maine Extension

2. The rhododendron lace bug (*Stephanitis rhododendri*)

This species is an emerging concern for gardens holding collections of rhododendrons, azaleas, and pieris. Its distribution is expanding in parts of Europe and North America, with climate change potentially increasing its establishment and impact.

Both adults and nymphs feed on the underside of leaves, reducing plant vigour and affecting ornamental value.

Look for:

- Yellow, bronze, or silvery stippling on upper leaf surfaces
- Black varnish-like spots on leaf undersides
- White cast skins and eggs along the midrib
- Premature leaf drop or general yellowing

Key actions:

- Inspect leaf undersides during spring and summer
- Remove heavily infested leaves where practical
- Include susceptible hosts in routine plant health surveys
- Report unusual or severe infestations



Photo by Paul Langlois, USDA APHIS

5. The red palm weevil (*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*)

This insect is considered one of the world's most destructive pests of palms, affecting more than 40 species, including date palms, coconut palms, oil palms, and ornamental species such as the Canary Island date palm (*Phoenix canariensis*). Originally native to Asia, it has spread across the Middle East, Europe, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, where recent detections and preparedness efforts have been highlighted by the [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#), and the [International Plant Protection Convention \(IPPC\)](#).

Larvae develop within palm trunks and crowns, feeding internally and often remaining undetected until severe damage has occurred.

Look for:

- Feeding wounds or holes near leaf bases
- Oozing brown frass around the crown
- Wilting or collapse of central leaves
- Chewed or partially detached fronds
- Unexplained decline or canopy collapse

Key actions:

- Inspect palms regularly, particularly around the crown and trunk base
- Prioritise monitoring of newly acquired palms
- Avoid moving potentially infested material
- Report suspect findings promptly to plant health authorities



Photo by iNaturalist user rainman1212, CC BY-NC 4.0

4. The myrtle rust (*Austropuccinia psidii*)

This fungal disease affects members of the Myrtaceae family, including eucalyptus, bottlebrushes, lilly pilli, guava, and other ornamental and native species. Since emerging outside its native range in South America, it has spread to multiple regions worldwide, posing a significant threat to horticulture, forestry, and biodiversity.

The disease primarily affects young leaves, shoots, flowers, and fruit.

Look for:

- Bright yellow or orange powdery spores on young tissues
- Leaf distortion and stunting
- Premature leaf drop
- Shoot dieback and necrotic lesions
- Reduced flowering and canopy decline

Key actions:

- Monitor susceptible hosts during periods of active growth
- Avoid moving potentially infected plant material
- Remove and safely dispose of infected material where appropriate
- Report suspect findings to plant health authorities



Photo by Scot Nelson

3. The Asian longhorn beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*)

This beetle is an invasive wood-boring pest of broadleaved trees, including maple, birch, poplar, willow, ash, elm, and sycamore. Native to Asia, it has caused significant damage in Europe and North America and remains a regulated quarantine pest.

Larvae tunnel deep into woody tissues, weakening trees and eventually causing decline or death.

Look for:

- Large black beetles with distinctive white spots and long banded antennae
- Circular exit holes approximately 1 cm in diameter
- Frass and sawdust-like material accumulating on branches or at the tree base
- Sap flow, branch dieback, or canopy thinning

Key actions:

- Inspect susceptible tree species regularly
- Check for exit holes and frass during routine surveys
- Avoid moving potentially infested wood material
- Report suspect findings immediately



3. The pasture mealybug (*Helicococcus summervillei*)

This sap-feeding insect is a pest of grasses, especially pasture and hay species. It can cause pasture dieback by weakening plants, reducing vigour, and leaving expanding patches of yellowed, stunted, or dead grass.

Look for:

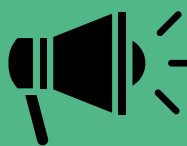
- Small white, waxy, fluffy insects on grass leaves, crowns, stems, thatch, or soil surface.
- Yellowing or reddening of leaves, often mistaken for drought or nutrient stress.
- Stunted growth and poor root development.
- Expanding dead patches and pasture decline.
- Grasses weakening over time, especially in warm, humid conditions.

Key actions:

- Inspect crowns, leaf undersides, thatch, and soil surface closely, since the pest is often hidden.
- Reduce movement of infested hay, planting material, and shared equipment between sites.
- Maintain healthy stands through good thatch management to reduce plant stress and monitor for signs of dieback.
- Report suspect infestations to the relevant plant health or agricultural authority for confirmation



PROJECT CALLS



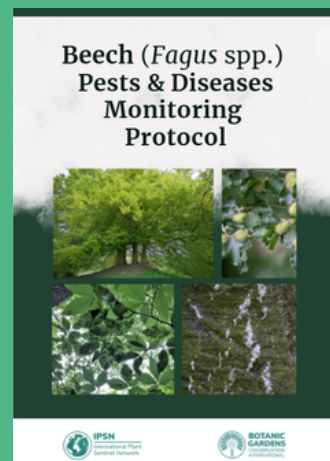
SIGN UP FOR THE BEECH MONITORING SURVEY

The IPSN has launched a new initiative inviting botanic gardens to **visually survey beech trees in their living collections**. Beech (*Fagus sp.*) is an ecologically and economically important genus, but it is increasingly threatened by emerging pests and diseases. This survey focuses on four key threats: **beech leaf disease**, ***Petrakia* leaf spot**, **beech scale**, and **woolly beech aphid**.

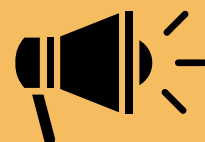
Monitoring will take place throughout the growing season, with all results reviewed by diagnostic specialists. A detailed protocol is available to support participants and guide the survey.



Register here



JOIN THE HAWTHORN SAMPLING INITIATIVE



Hawthorn (*Crataegus spp.*) Sampling Protocol

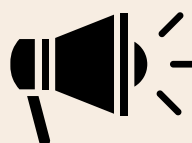


For a second year in a row, the IPSN and its collaborator Forest Research are launching a **sampling initiative for hawthorn**, targeting two important diseases: **fireblight** and **rust (*Gymnosporangium spp.*)**. Gardens participating will contribute valuable data to improve preparedness for emerging plant health threats in the UK, while also gaining a better understanding of the health status of their own collections, with diagnostic support provided throughout.

A detailed protocol is available to guide sampling and monitoring.



Register here



CALL FOR MULTILINGUAL VOLUNTEERS

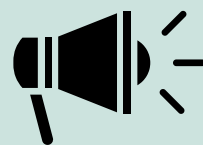
We're looking for volunteers to help **translate key resources, including protocols, posters, factsheets, and information guides, into other languages**.

If you're fluent in another language and passionate about biosecurity, we'd love your help bridging language gaps and strengthening how we communicate safety and prevention information to a wide range of communities and stakeholders. This is a great opportunity to build practical experience while supporting a meaningful cause. Every contribution makes a difference.

To get involved, contact itxaso.quintana@bgci.org or lara.salido@bgci.org.

PROJECT CALLS

PILOT OUR BIOSECURITY PATHWAY RISK ANALYSIS (BPRA) TOOL



A couple of years back, the IPSN and its collaborators [Fera](#) and the [Tree Health Centre at the Yorkshire Arboretum](#) developed a BPRA framework specifically for botanic gardens, arboreta, and other organisations managing living plant collections.

The project brought together practitioners, plant health specialists, and biosecurity experts through a series of workshops, technical reviews, and user-testing exercises to identify how pathway risk analysis can be made more accessible and practical for day-to-day use. Feedback from participants highlighted the need for a simpler, more intuitive approach supported by clear guidance, visual resources, case studies, and practical mitigation advice.

Building on these recommendations, the next phase of the project will focus on developing a digital decision-support tool that will help users:

- Identify and assess biosecurity pathways across their sites
- Prioritise risks using simple visual outputs
- Access mitigation recommendations
- Record actions and monitor progress over time

The digital tool will be accompanied by a **suite of support resources**, including a **glossary of terms**, **guidance documents**, and **further information materials**.

We are now seeking botanic gardens and arboreta interested in participating in the **pilot phase during 2026-2027**. Pilot participants will have the opportunity to **test the prototype tool and supporting resources**, **provide feedback on usability and functionality**, and **help shape the future development of this resource**. Whether your organisation is already well established in its biosecurity journey or just getting started, we welcome participation from gardens of all sizes and regions.

If you would like to learn more or express your interest in joining the pilot, contact lara.salido@bgci.org or itxaso.quintana@bgci.org.



PROJECT UPDATES



»»» ONGOING SURVEILLANCE FOR TARGET PESTS & DISEASES IN BELGIAN GARDENS

For the fifth consecutive year, living collections across Belgium are monitoring pests and diseases of concern affecting host species of interest to the UK. Target organisms include **oak borer beetles in oaks**, **beech leaf disease** and **Petrakia leaf spot in beech**, **rose rosette virus in roses**, **pine tortoise scale in pines**, and the **Japanese beetle**.

In May, we launched the Spring survey season with a kick-off meeting, spotlighting key symptoms to watch out for and highlighting available IPSN-produced monitoring resources. This year, eight collections are taking part, including two new participants.

The collections have now completed their spring surveys and submitted their observations, which diagnostic specialists at [Fera](#) will review. In an upcoming post-survey online workshop, these experts will outline their findings to participants and Belgian plant protection organisations.

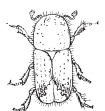


»»» DIGITAL TRAPPING TOOL PILOTING IN BELGIUM

The IPSN is collaborating with the [Centre wallon de Recherches agronomiques](#) and the Belgian National Plant Protection Organisation to develop a digital data collection tool supporting plant health trapping activities in living collections.

Building on the existing [Electronic Plant Health Checker \(ePHC\) form](#), the tool has been designed to **facilitate the standardised recording of trapping data directly in the field**, including information on **trap type and location, target pests, host plants, survey dates, and trap catches**.

During the 2026 growing season, members of the [Belgian Botanic Garden Association](#) will pilot the tool as part of their routine trapping activities. Subsequent feedback from participating gardens will help assess its usefulness in conducting plant health surveys in botanic gardens and arboreta.



»»» EMERALD ASH BORER (EAB) AND ASH DIEBACK (ADB) MONITORING AND TRAPPING



This year, 11 botanic gardens have received traps and lures to help monitor the EAB, with five of these launching visual surveys for the EAB and ADB. Three Ukrainian gardens are taking part – a particularly critical contribution, since EAB is already present in Ukraine and any findings will sharpen our understanding of the pest's distribution and impact across Europe.

Trapping and visual monitoring will continue throughout the summer, with results reviewed by diagnostic specialists from [Fera](#) at an online workshop towards the end of the year. This marks the initiative's fifth year, and we are grateful to all participating gardens for their continued commitment and support.

PROJECT UPDATES



➤➤➤ SMALL GRANTS PROJECTS RECAP

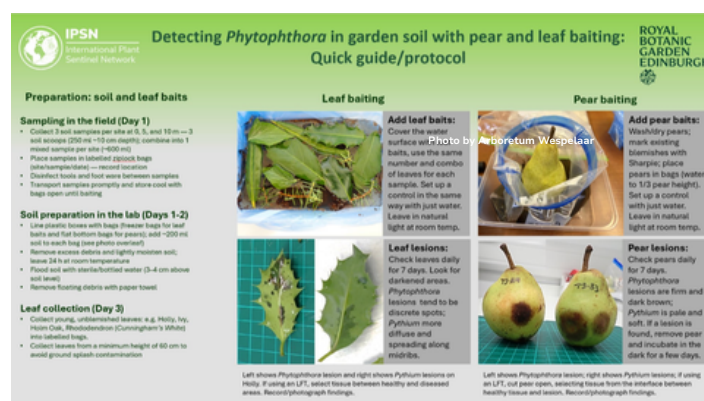
The IPSN Small Grants initiative helps support projects led by living collection staff and students. Last year's funded projects focused on three areas of biosecurity and surveillance:

- **Strengthening biosecurity through policy development — Birmingham Botanical Gardens**

Led by Bethan Collerton, this project developed a **practical Biosecurity Blueprint** to help botanic gardens and arboreta strengthen their institutional biosecurity policies. Drawing on best practices from across the horticultural sector, Bethan and her peers produced **accessible guidance on plant movements, quarantine, contractor management, visitor biosecurity, and plant health reporting**, together with a **suite of practical resources**.

- **Developing practical soil surveillance for *Phytophthora* — Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh**

Led by Joanne Taylor, Amanda Jones, and Matthew Elliott, this project produced and tested a **simple, low-cost protocol for detecting *Phytophthora* pathogens in garden soils**. By adapting laboratory techniques into methods that can be implemented by horticultural teams with minimal equipment, the project provides botanic gardens with an accessible tool to support early detection.



- **Monitoring emerging conifer dieback — Forest Research**

Led by Caroline Gorton, this project focused on improving surveillance of *Cupressus* dieback, a disease affecting conifer collections. Working with Forestry England's nationally important arboreta, Caroline developed a **standardised photographic severity guide and assessment protocol**, which was integrated with the IPSN Plant Health Checker, while also investigating the fungal pathogens associated with the disease.



Photos by Westonbirt Arboretum

While funding for the programme has come to an end, we are grateful to everyone who has contributed to its success over the past three years. The initiative has supported a wide range of projects, producing fantastic research that has benefited botanic gardens, arboreta, and the wider plant health community. These projects have also fostered new partnerships, and, above all, they have demonstrated how relatively modest funding can deliver significant and lasting impacts. We hope the programme can be relaunched in future, so we can continue supporting the outstanding work and collaboration it has inspired.

➤➤➤ BEXYL FINAL ASSEMBLY & EFSA XYLELLA CONFERENCE RECAP

22-26
JUN



The IPSN team was pleased to participate in the final BeXyl General Assembly and the 5th European Conference on *Xylella fastidiosa* in Bari, Italy. The events provided an excellent opportunity to reflect on four years of collaborative research, present the contributions of botanic gardens and arboreta in South and Central America to *Xylella* surveillance, and highlight the important role of living collections in plant health research, biosecurity, and public engagement.

The conference also enabled the IPSN team to strengthen relationships with researchers, regulators, and plant health practitioners from across Europe and beyond, exchanging knowledge and exploring future collaborations. A field visit to affected vineyards in the Apulia region provided valuable insight into the impacts of *Xylella fastidiosa* and current disease management approaches, reinforcing the importance of international collaboration in tackling emerging plant health threats.

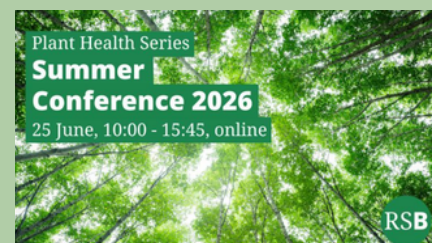
 [Read about the event here](#)

➤➤➤ RSB PLANT HEALTH SERIES RECAP

25 JUN

The IPSN team was pleased to attend the Royal Society of Biology's Plant Health Series Summer Conference, which brought together researchers, industry representatives and early career professionals to discuss the latest developments in UK plant health. The event featured keynote presentations on innovative approaches to improving crop resilience through gene editing and advances in plant disease research, alongside flash talks showcasing emerging research across the sector.

The conference provided an excellent opportunity to learn about current plant health challenges, exchange ideas with colleagues from academia and industry, and strengthen connections within the UK plant health community. Events such as the RSB Plant Health Series continue to play an important role in fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and professional development across the sector.



 [Read about the event here](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

1 3

➤➤➤ IPSN UK MEMBERS AUTUMN MEETING

TBD

Following our UK Members Summer Meeting, we are in the midst of planning our **in-person UK Members Autumn Meeting**, where we hope to **bring together British-based partners and members to share network updates, exchange experiences, and discuss the latest plant health activities taking place in the UK and beyond.**

While the meeting date is yet to be confirmed, we are currently exploring options during the last week of September or the first week of October.

To help us organise the meeting, we would be grateful if you could complete the short form below, [indicating your availability for the proposed dates](#) and [your top three priorities for future training, information, or facilitated discussion](#).

We look forward to welcoming many of you in person this autumn.



[Access the form here](#)

➤➤➤ IPPC–FAO PLANT HEALTH CAMPUS

7 JUL

The [International Plant Protection Convention \(IPPC\)](#), Secretariat and the [FAO eLearning Academy](#), with support from the European Union, have developed the [IPPC Plant Health Campus](#), a free online learning platform providing **multilingual, certified e-learning courses, practical guidance, and technical resources**. The courses cover a wide range of topics, from pest risk analysis, surveillance, and diagnostics, to plant import and export systems and emergency responses. The platform offers flexible learning pathways that support professional development and help strengthen biosecurity understanding and skills — learners who complete the courses receive verifiable digital badges in recognition of their work.



To support Spanish-speaking users, the IPPC Secretariat is hosting a **free webinar in Spanish** on **Tuesday, July 7th** from **15:00 to 17:00 (CEST)**. The session will include an **introductory tour of the Campus, demonstrations of its key features, and insights from active users of the platform**. It will also offer practical ideas for integrating the courses into **personal learning, institutional training programmes, and national capacity-building initiatives**.

The webinar is open to everyone studying or working in plant health, including professionals from botanic gardens, arboreta, and other horticultural organisations.



[Register here](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

1 4

»»» IPPC – FAO GLOBAL YOUTH CONTEST

31 JUL



For younger members of our community, the FAO eLearning Academy has launched the Global Youth Contest: "From Learning to Impact", inviting participants aged 18-35 to demonstrate **how knowledge gained through FAO eLearning courses have positively influenced their work, studies, or community**. Winners will be awarded a fully funded trip to Rome to attend the World Food Forum and have their stories featured by the FAO and IPPC.

This is an excellent opportunity for young professionals, students, and volunteers working in botanic gardens to showcase how they are contributing to plant health and biosecurity.

Applications close on **Friday, July 31st**.



[Register here](#)

»»» UK PLANT PATHOLOGY CONFERENCE 2026

8-11 SEP

Registration is now open for the Plant Pathology 2026 (PPATH2026) and Early Careers Plant Pathology 2026 (ECPP2026) Conferences, an annual meeting organised by the British Society for Plant Pathology (BSPP).

Taking place in **Norwich, UK**, from **Tuesday, 8th to Friday, 11th September**, the event will explore the **latest advances in plant pathology** through a series of keynote presentations, scientific sessions, posters, and networking opportunities.

This is an excellent opportunity for British-based IPSN members to meet and connect with the wider botanic garden community. The Early Careers Plant Pathology meeting notably provides students and early-career researchers the chance to present their work, develop new skills, and network with their peers. Further information on abstracts, accommodation, and the meeting's programme is available on the BSPP website.



[Register here](#)



We hope you enjoyed reading this edition!

Share your questions, insights, or ideas with the network by emailing:
ipsn-l@listerv.bgci.org

You can also reach out to our team directly using the contact details below:

Lara Salido: lara.salido@bgci.org

Itxaso Quintana: itxaso.quintana@bgci.org

Eva Morisot: eva.morisot@bgci.org

Keep up to date with all IPSN news by following us:

Web: <https://www.bgci.org/our-work/networks/ipsn/>

Bluesky: [@ipsn-bgci.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/ipsn-bgci.bsky.social)

X: [@IPSN_BGCI](https://twitter.com/IPSN_BGCI)

LinkedIn: [International Plant Sentinel Network](https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-plant-sentinel-network/)

Please update your BGCI [GardenSearch](#) profile and collection information in [PlantSearch](#).



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