

IPSN NEWSLETTER



IPSN

International Plant
Sentinel Network

»» September 2026 ««



TOP NEWS!

IPSN UK Members In-person Meeting

On Monday 21st of September, IPSN members and partners from across the UK came together at Birmingham Botanical Gardens for a day of project updates, plant health and biosecurity learning, and knowledge sharing.

The meeting covered recent IPSN surveillance initiatives, new resources and activities, and key pests and diseases affecting plant collections. The practical sessions focused on biosecurity, with participants examining mitigation measures and helping develop the Biosecurity Pathways Risk Analysis (BPRA) tool.

The group also learnt about Birmingham Botanical Gardens' implementation of biosecurity measures across its collections. The Gardens' horticultural team then led a closing tour of the lush Glasshouses.



[READ THE FULL RECAP HERE](#)



IPSN UPDATES

➤➤➤ RESOURCES

Educational Resource Kit for Plant Health & Biosecurity

English and French resources coming soon

As part of the [BeXyL project](#), a Horizon Europe initiative addressing the impacts of *Xylella fastidiosa* and exploring effective response measures, we have developed a set of engaging educational and awareness-raising resources.

The resources are designed to **help botanic gardens and educators engage visitors of all ages**, including families, school groups, students, volunteers, and plant enthusiasts, on **the risks of pests and diseases** and the **important role that botanic gardens play in plant health and biosecurity**.

The educational kit contains:

- Ready-to-use materials for exhibitions, workshops, and public programmes
- Interactive activities for children, young people, and adult learners
- Visitor engagement tools explaining plant biosecurity in clear and creative ways
- Infographics and visual materials to support engaging communication

Originally developed in Spanish, the kit has now been translated into English and French. We look forward to making these resources available for download on our website and social media channels in the coming months. Further updates will follow.



[Access the kit in Spanish](#)



Manual now available in English, French, and Spanish

The IPSN Identification and Reporting Manual helps botanic gardens, arboreta, and other plant collections **make decisions when specimens show damage from suspicious, priority, and/or quarantine organisms**.

Based on the principles established by the [International Plant Protection Convention \(IPPC\)](#), this manual provides clear and accessible guidance on the steps involved in identifying and reporting plant health concerns. It includes a decision-flow diagram that guides readers through the appropriate actions for different situations.

The manual is available in [Spanish](#), [French](#), and [English](#).



[Access the manuals here](#)

Manual for Identifying & Reporting Plant Health Concerns



»»» RESOURCES

Biosecurity Posters & Signage

Posters and signage updated and now downloadable

A set of biosecurity posters and signage for botanic gardens has been updated and is now available on our website.

Originally developed by the [Tree Health Centre at the Castle Howard Arboretum](#) as part of the IPSN Small Grants Programme, the materials outline **key biosecurity activities, including hygiene measures, basic policy requirements, and visitor guidance** for staff, volunteers, and visitors.

The materials have also been translated into Spanish and French versions, which will be released shortly.

The posters and signage can be downloaded, printed, and/or edited to suit your organisation and audience. Please get in touch with the IPSN team if you would like the modifiable versions.



[Access the biosecurity signs and posters](#)



Manual updated and ready to be shared

The IPSN Sampling Manual has been updated and provides practical, accessible **guidance for collecting and submitting plant and pest samples for diagnostic purposes**.

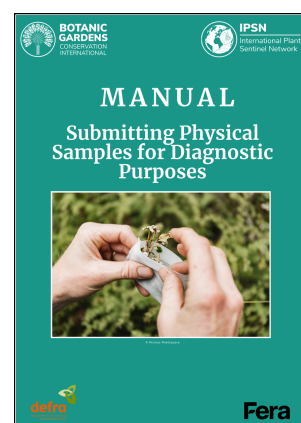
The revised resource covers sampling approaches for different types of plant health problems, including damage caused by invertebrate pests and plant pathogens, and guidance on selecting, collecting, handling, and packaging samples.

Designed to support botanic garden staff and other stakeholders involved in plant health monitoring, this manual aims to help improve the quality and consistency of samples submitted for diagnosis, support more reliable identification, and enable effective follow-up of unusual plant health observations.



[Access the manual here](#)

Manual for Submitting Physical Samples for Diagnosis





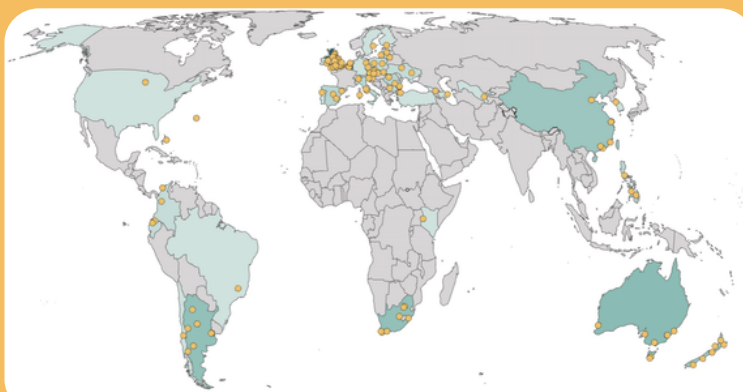
NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to our newest member:

- [Inala Jurassic Garden](#), Australia



[Explore our members' map](#)



JOIN OUR NEW LINKEDIN GROUP

The **International Plant Sentinel Network (IPSN) LinkedIn Group** was recently created as a space for IPSN members, partners, and collaborators to connect, share ideas, and strengthen collaboration across our global network.

We warmly encourage all IPSN members and partners to join the group, introduce themselves, share news and updates, ask questions, exchange ideas, and contribute to discussions as we build a vibrant, connected IPSN community.



[Join the IPSN group](#)



BLOG POSTS FROM MEMBERS AROUND THE WORLD

The IPSN Blog Series features articles aimed at a general audience. Written by members and partners, these pieces cover a wide range of plant health and biosecurity issues, which are presented in an engaging and informative way. If you would like to submit a blog post, please read our submission guidelines below and get in touch for further details.



[Blog Guidelines](#)

NEW BLOG POST – DISCOVER THE PESTS THREATENING UK BEECHES

Heading To The Beech

Chris Malumphy, a veteran entomologist from [Fera Science](#), spotlights the pests encountered during surveys of beech trees across the UK.



[Read the Blog Post](#)

This activity is part of a Defra-funded project collecting data on UK beech pests and diseases.

[Click here](#) to join the survey.



PROJECT UPDATES



»»» SUMMER TARGET SURVEYS COMPLETED IN BELGIUM

This year, five Belgian gardens have participated in visual surveys of target pests and diseases (oak borer beetles, beech leaf disease, *Petrakia* leaf spot, rose rosette virus, pine tortoise scale, and Japanese beetle) in their collections.

With these surveys now coming to an end, participating gardens have submitted their findings, which will be shared with Belgian plant health authorities and diagnostic experts and reviewed by Fera Science diagnosticians. Results will then be discussed during a post-summer survey workshop in early October, ensuring that all the data is reviewed and key findings shared.



Location of participating botanic garden in Belgium.

After five years of carrying out these surveys, staff in botanic gardens and arboreta have strengthened their ability to identify, collect, and report potential plant health concerns, as well as record the impact of environmental factors. The upcoming workshop will provide an opportunity to reflect on surveillance activities and explore how surveys can be further improved to support plant health decision-making.

TESTING OF DIGITAL TOOL FOR TRAP DATA <<<



As part of the SURQUAPUB project, the IPSN has collaborated with the Walloon Agricultural Research Centre (CRA-W) in Belgium to trial a new digital survey form for trapping activities, which was developed within the electronic Plant Health Check (ePHC) suite.

The form was designed to enable botanic gardens to record and submit trapping survey data in a more consistent and standardised way, facilitating data collection, management, and subsequent analysis and sharing with the relevant plant health authorities.

As the current data-collection period nears its end, survey data was sent to project leads for review. A feedback session with participating gardens will take place during the winter season to gather feedback on user experience, recognise challenges encountered during the pilot, and identify any areas of improvement ahead of the survey's wider dissemination.



»»» BIOSECURITY PATHWAYS RISK ANALYSIS TOOL

As part of its 2026-2027 activities, the IPSN is developing a Biosecurity Pathways Risk Analysis (BPRA) tool to help botanic gardens identify and assess the main pathways through which plant pests and pathogens may enter, spread within, or escape from their living collections.

This digital tool will provide a practical framework for gardens to understand their biosecurity risks and identify proportionate mitigation measures based on their circumstances, capacity, and available resources.

At the IPSN UK In-person Autumn Meeting, we held an interactive session exploring these pathways and the actions gardens can take at different levels of capacity. We'd now like to hear ideas and recommendations from members and partners beyond the UK. The IPSN will soon email a form so you can share your feedback on this tool.



EMERALD ASH BORER & ASH DIEBACK: VISUAL SURVEYS & TRAPPING IN EASTERN EUROPE

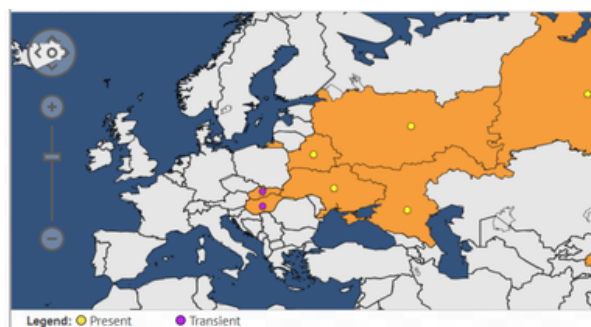
13 botanic gardens across six Eastern European countries have been conducting trapping activities and visual monitoring for Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) and Ash Dieback during late spring and summer.

Results from these activities are already being submitted and reviewed by local experts ahead of evaluation by the project entomologist and diagnostician from Fera Science. Results will then be discussed with participating botanic gardens and diagnosticians during a post-survey workshop planned for the end of the year, providing an opportunity to share findings, discuss observations, and strengthen collaboration.

Meanwhile, official EPPO reports indicate that this priority quarantine organism continues to expand westward in Europe, with recent detections reported in Hungary and Slovakia.

Read the official reports here:

- For Hungary: <https://gd.eppo.int/reporting/article-8433>
- For Slovakia: <https://gd.eppo.int/reporting/article-8480>



Latest distribution of EAB in Europe. Source: EPPO.

HAWTHORN SAMPLING & BEECH MONITORING INITIATIVES IN THE UK



During spring and summer, two monitoring and sampling initiatives have taken place across UK botanic gardens and arboreta.

Hawthorn disease sampling

Nine UK botanic gardens, together with volunteers across the country, are monitoring for two important hawthorn (*Crataegus* sp.) diseases: fireblight and rust. Through this initiative, they aim to better understand how these pathogens are distributed and to assess the level of risk they pose to the wider UK treescape.

When suspected cases are identified, samples are collected and sent to Fera Science and Forest Research for diagnosis. Participants are sent protocols covering hawthorn identification, monitoring procedures, sample collection and submission, and guidance on recognising disease symptoms.



Fireblight and rust symptoms in Hawthorn.

Visual surveillance of Beech pests and diseases



Beech scale reported on *Fagus sylvatica*.

As part of a Defra-funded project, UK botanic gardens and arboreta are carrying out visual surveys of their beech collections for four priority pests and diseases: beech leaf disease, *Petrakia* leaf spot, beech scale, and woolly beech aphid.

These surveys aim to establish a baseline of their presence, distribution, and impact, helping to improve early pathogen detection, strengthen biosecurity preparedness and response, and contribute to national plant health decision-making.

Five botanic gardens across England and Scotland are currently participating in this initiative. They have received a detailed survey protocol, data collection forms, and guidance on recognising the target organisms. A new guide to the arthropods of beech in Britain will also be published to help identify the most commonly found species.

EVENTS

7

➤➤➤ NATIVE TREE SEED STRATEGY WORKSHOP

6-8
October
2026

Location: Nairobi, Kenya

As part of the RTRP-Seed project activities, a consultation workshop will take place in Nairobi this October to support the development of Kenya's Native Tree Seed Strategy.

The two-day event will bring together project partners and stakeholders to develop actions, timelines, and an implementation framework for the Native Tree Seed Strategy. The IPSN will contribute to discussions related to plant health and biosecurity and help explore how invasive species prevention and management can be integrated into future activities, supporting the principle of planting *the right tree, in the right place, for the right purpose*.

➤➤➤ EABRACE & FORSAID WORKSHOP – TREE HEALTH IN ACTION

7-8
October
2026

Location: Kaunas, Lithuania & Online

EABRACE and FORSAID are co-organising a workshop on “Tree Health in Action: Bridging Science, Standards, and Practice”, which brings together researchers, plant health authorities, diagnostic laboratories, botanic gardens, and other tree health professionals.

The IPSN will participate in discussions and knowledge exchange on Emerald Ash Borer surveillance and preparedness, early detection and monitoring, and approaches for translating research into practical management and policy.



FORSAID

➤➤➤ RSB PLANT HEALTH SERIES

15
October
2026

Location: Oxford, UK

Oxford Botanic Garden is hosting this event as part of the RSB Plant Health Series and Biology Week.

Enjoy talks from plant health experts, networking with the plant health community, as well as a guided tour and time to explore the gardens.

Royal Society of
Biology



[Learn more and register here](#)

➤➤➤ SCIFOR 26

11-12
November
2026

Location: Edinburgh, UK

The Science & Innovation in Forestry (SCIFOR) Conference will take place at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, bringing together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to explore the latest evidence and innovation shaping forestry in Great Britain.

With more than 40 sessions across 13 themes, the programme will cover topics highly relevant to the IPSN community, including tree health, pests and diseases, climate resilience, biodiversity, and forest genetics.



[Learn more and register here](#)

EVENTS

8

➤➤➤ BIOSECURITY TRAINING FOR THE CARIBBEAN & CENTRAL AMERICAN NETWORK

16-20
November
2026

Location: Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

The Caribbean and Central American Botanic Gardens Network (CCABGN), the IPSN, and the Jardín Botánico CECON-USAC will co-host a four-day regional workshop in Guatemala focused on plant health and biosecurity in living plant collections funded by the Leon Levy Foundation.

Bringing together horticultural and living collections staff from botanical gardens across Central America and the Caribbean, the workshop will combine practical training, knowledge exchange, and peer learning on topics such as pest and disease surveillance, biosecurity best practices, diagnostics and monitoring, and help participants transfer and apply what they learn within their own institutions.



CCABG
Caribbean and Central American
Botanic Gardens Network



➤➤➤ OAK HEALTH WEBINAR

3
December
2026

Location: Online

Forest Research, Aberystwyth University, and the Sylva Foundation are co-hosting a webinar on observing and understanding oak health across the UK, introducing a new practical and scientifically robust approach to monitoring oak health.

The session will explore current threats to oak, including Acute Oak Decline, introduce the Forest Lab oak health monitoring project, and demonstrate how a new assessment app can help woodland managers and volunteers record tree health and support evidence-based management decisions.



Forest Research



[Learn more and register here](#)



PAST EVENTS

PLANTHEALTH4LIFE CLOSURE EVENT <<<

On 22 September 2026, the IPSN participated in the closing event of the EFSA #PlantHealth4Life campaign at the Real Jardín Botánico in Madrid. The IPSN presented on the important role of botanic gardens and arboreta as living laboratories for plant health, supporting surveillance and early detection through sentinel plants, while serving as hubs for education, public engagement, and knowledge sharing on plant health and biosecurity.

The event was a fantastic opportunity to strengthen connections with colleagues from botanic gardens across Spain and learn from their extensive experience in plant health monitoring, integrated pest management, and monitoring of invasive and emerging pests. A huge thank you to the organisers from the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and EFSA for inviting us to contribute to this inspiring and collaborative event.





We hope you enjoyed the read!

Share your questions, insights, or ideas
by reaching out to our team:

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

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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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