

Tree Pest and Disease Factsheet: Oaks (*Quercus* spp.)



What to look out for on Oak

- This factsheet applies to both common oak species: pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) and sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*)

1. Acute Oak Decline



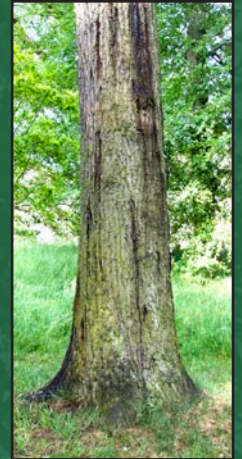
Canopy decline

Key facts

- Impacting thousands of oak trees across England and Wales
- Trees suddenly decline and can die within a few years
- Oak decline has multiple causes: drought and insect activity can weaken a tree, making it more susceptible to bacterial and fungal disease

Key symptoms

- Dark weeping patches of fluid on the trunk (stem bleeds)
- Stem bleeds may be dry or wet (oozing)
- Dead or dying branches
- D-shaped exit holes of the beetle *Agrilus biguttatus* may be visible on the trunk. Beetle activity is thought to weaken trees and may transmit disease



Stem bleeds (above) and closeup (below)



Agrilus beetle exit hole on bark

What to do if you suspect oak decline on your site

- Report your sighting via TreeAlert (see below)
- If you have a tree with stem bleeds, do not remove the tree unless it is a safety hazard. Monitor the symptoms as trees can recover
- To avoid transmitting the disease to healthy trees, do not touch stem bleeds and then touch other trees



2. Oak Powdery Mildew (*Erysiphe* spp.)



Key facts and symptoms

- Fungal disease present across the whole of the UK
- Coats the leaves in a white powder that develops throughout summer
- Doesn't kill the tree but can weaken it, and stunts the growth of young trees
- Report your disease sighting via TreeAlert

3. Oak Processionary Moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*)



Key facts and symptoms

- Currently present in London and the South East Caterpillars "process" along trees in spring and feed on leaves, weakening the tree
- This pest is a **risk to human health**: contact with the caterpillar hairs causes serious skin and eye irritation
- Sightings must be reported immediately to the Forestry Commission via TreeAlert

Pest and Disease Reporting

- If you spot a pest or disease, report your concerns through the Forestry Commission's online reporting tool TreeAlert at treealert.forestryresearch.gov.uk
- Make sure you clean boots and equipment before and after site visits, to remove any mud and debris that can transmit pests and diseases

