



What to do if you think you've seen a **Plant pest or disease**

An unfamiliar plant pest could be an invertebrate organism or a disease that we haven't got in Western Australia that could cause significant problems for our primary industries and/or environment if it were to become established here. Well known examples of harmful plant pests and diseases include Queensland fruit fly and fire blight, but there are many others. The list of exotic plant pests is long and includes various insects (beetles, weevils, aphids, thrips etc), fungi, bacteria, nematodes and so on.

An unfamiliar plant pest or disease could turn out to be:

- *Exotic*: usually found overseas or interstate; there are no known cases in Western Australia; or
- *Novel*: a disease that has never been seen before in Western Australia or anywhere else; high potential to be serious if it were to establish.

Why is it so important to report any sightings straight away?

Many emergency plant pests are capable of spreading rapidly. The sooner the Department of Agriculture and Food WA (the Department) is advised of the problem, the better the chance of control and eradication before it's too late.

IF IN DOUBT, REPORT IT.

We really do not mind investigating reports that turn out not to be exotic plant pests or diseases.

Where you might see an unfamiliar plant pest or disease

- In or on fruit or vegetables you have purchased or obtained from another person
- In or on plants you have purchased or obtained from another person
- On roadside plants or in bushland
- In a nursery or orchard
- In your garden or backyard
- In pasture or crops

What to do if you see what you think might be an emergency plant pest?

Ring the Department's 'Pest and Disease Information Service' hotline on 1800 084 881. The list below indicates some of the information required when you report the pest or disease. Don't worry if you don't have all the information ~ more detail the better.

- Where you saw it. A GPS location is ideal; otherwise, just tell us where you saw it.
- A **photo** of the suspect pest and of any damage it might have already caused. If that isn't possible, a description of what the pest looks like and what kind of damage, if any, it appears to have caused.
- What plant or plants are affected. If you don't know the name, a description of the affected plant(s) would help.

- If it's on fruit, vegetables or plants that you have purchased or obtained from another person, the name and address of where you bought them from.
- The growing situation, for example, on the roadside, in an orchard, at a nursery, bushland etc.
- The level of infestation, for example, just one plant, several plants, whether the infestation appears to have spread far etc.
- If you wish to remain anonymous, that's fine. But if you provide your contact details, we can report back to you on what we find.

The precautions you should take

- Avoid or minimise touching or disturbing the affected plants.
- Clean and disinfect your hands and anything else that has been in contact with any affected plants.
- Clean any soil or plant material from your boots and outer clothing before you leave the site of the affected plants.

Sending in specimens for identification

When **sending or delivering samples**, the following information is required:

Contact or collector's name, location where the specimen was found, full address, telephone number and e-mail address, description of the damage and date collected.

Send or deliver to: Department of Agriculture and Food
Pest and Disease Information Service
3 Baron Hay Court, South Perth WA 6151

What happens when you report a suspect exotic plant pest or disease?

Depending on the information you provide, we may send a biosecurity/quarantine officer or one of the Department's plant pest specialists (entomologist, plant pathologist, plant virologist) out to the site to investigate. Such an investigation would normally involve taking samples for our **AgWest Plant Laboratories** to confirm the identity of the pest and, if relevant, further investigation to find out where the pest may have come from and where it might have already spread to. The site is likely to be quarantined while these investigations are carried out.

If an exotic plant pest is confirmed, the first priority is to contain and eradicate it. However, if the pest has already spread extensively before we get the first report of it, eradication may not be feasible. That is why it is so important that you report anything you suspect might be an emergency plant pest – and do so as promptly as you can.

Useful links to websites that may help you identify a plant pest or disease are: the **Pest and Disease Image Library (PaDIL)**, **HortGuard** and **GrainGuard**.

For further information, please contact us on:

Freecall: 1800 084 881
Email: info@agric.wa.gov.au
Visit: www.agric.wa.gov.au