



Nature Champions



Ash



Ash is one of our most beautiful native trees. It grows throughout Scotland, although it is not usually found at high elevations and does not grow well in acidic soils. Ash is a large deciduous tree which can grow up to 35m and live up to 400 years old. It is easily identifiable, either by its compound leaves composed of opposing leaflets or in winter by its large distinctive black buds.

955 species of birds, mammals, insects, fungi, mosses and lichens use ash. 65 of these are highly dependent on ash and 45 are only found on ash. This shows the biodiversity associated with native trees.



**MSP Nature
Champion**

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Action Needed

- Promote the benefits of UK sourced and grown trees in order to improve biosecurity of planting stock and support the nursery sector.
- Support increased tree resilience from pests and diseases by supporting increased native tree planting and native woodland creation as part of Scottish Government's target of 18,000 ha of new woodland creation by 2025.
- Ensure local authorities are resourced to manage ash dieback effectively and replace lost trees with the appropriate species.
- Ensure findings from the Scottish Plant Health Centre <https://www.planthealthcentre.scot/> on ash resilience and ecology are used to inform public policy.



Threats

In recent years ash has been gravely threatened by a fungal disease known as Chalara Ash dieback. The disease was first found in the UK in 2012, it is believed to have come to the UK with saplings brought over from the Netherlands. Since then the disease has gradually spread across the UK. A number of cases have recently been confirmed in Edinburgh for the first time. Disease is spread by wind and is usually fatal to infected trees. Some scientists have suggested that 80% of the UK ash population could be lost. However, some resilient trees have been found in England and research is being done into the genetic markers of more resilient trees.



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