Ash dieback (also known as Chalara dieback of ash) is a serious tree disease, caused by a fungus called Hymenoscyphus fraxineus.

Once infected, an ash tree will show the following symptoms:

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- Blackened, dead leaves.
- The veins of leaves – usually pale – can turn brown.
- In more mature ash trees, it is common to notice dieback of twigs and branches in the crown, with denser growth below where new shoots have begun to establish.

When a tree does become infected, the disease often proves fatal over time. Experience in Europe has shown that the fungus can kill young ash trees quickly, but can take several years to kill mature ash. It can also weaken it to a point that it may succumb sooner to attack from other pests and diseases.

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As we know, the loss of woodland ash will be significant, with 130,000 hectares of ash woodland threatened in the UK. However, we must also recognise that the loss of the millions of ash trees present in the wider countryside, in fields, in hedgerows and on roadsides will have a catastrophic impact on the UK’s landscape and biodiversity. Ash trees have their own unique ecosystems and are a valuable habitat and food source for many species of birds, invertebrates and lichens. Twelve million ash trees outside woods could be lost over the next 10 years and as gaps in these crucial habitat connections appear, the impact on wildlife and our landscape will be severe.

The Woodland Trust is supporting landowners to mitigate this risk. By planting trees you can safeguard the benefits that trees deliver for your land and preserve wildlife corridors to protect biodiversity. We are offering financial support and advice for landowners in the most affected areas, to start planting a range of species of additional trees outside woods, particularly individual trees and trees in hedgerows.

We are contributing approximately two-thirds of the cost, meaning you pay only £60 for your trees, 1.2 metre tubes and stakes.

If you are keen to plant more trees or are outside these areas, we have a variety of other schemes available at a reduced cost. We’ll also provide you with the necessary trees, advice and protection you need to successfully plant on your land.

We at the forefront of the fight

As well as offering subsidised trees, the Woodland Trust has also been working with the Government and plant health agencies, participating in plant health summits, assisting with field surveys and acting as a key stakeholder on various Tree Health Groups.

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Get in touch today

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Have you lost trees or hedges in the past, or do you have any new-vulnerable ash trees? Think about where new hedges could offer shelter for crops and animals, where space in the corners of fields and along watercourses could be filled, or of any wide verges where avenues and wildlife corridors of the future could be created.

PLANT NOW TO PROTECT TREES ON YOUR LAND

The Woodland Trust is offering a specially tailored Disease Recovery Pack to landowners in the hardest-hit counties (currently Northumberland, Norfolk, Suffolk, East Sussex and Kent). These packs contain a 45-tree mix of native broadleaf species.

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Ash dieback is here. Can you help?

What is ash dieback and how do I recognise it?

Reporting tree disease in your area

If you think you have seen Chalara dieback of ash on your land, and would like to find out what you need to report, please visit forestry.gov.uk/tre.alert

Managing infected trees and woodland on your land

The Forestry Commission is working with the Woodland Trust as part of a wider response to the threat of tree disease across the UK. If you live in one of the five most affected counties, you can access information about how to manage ash dieback on your land by visiting the regional areas of the Forestry Commission website:

- Norfolk and Suffolk: forestry.gov.uk/emidlands
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