Healthy nursery plants

– key to healthy horticulture, forestry and nature restorations

Webinar on 20 April 2026

Scientific studies have demonstrated that numerous declines and diebacks affecting horticultural crops, forests and natural ecosystems in Europe, Australia and the Americas are primarily caused by invasive soil- or airborne pathogens from the genus *Phytophthora*. Extensive surveys conducted in more than 2,500 nurseries and a similar number of restoration and planting sites across Europe revealed near-ubiquitous infestation with over 120 *Phytophthora* species, most of them exotic.

Nursery accreditation schemes have been operating successfully for years in Australia, California and recently the United Kingdom. They showcase that the spread of invasive plant pathogens can be drastically reduced through effective biosecurity standards, improving plant quality while ensuring the economic viability of the nursery sector.

Programme

Moderator: Andrea Ficke (NIBIO, Ås, Norway).

14:00: Welcome to delegates. 5 min – **Andrea Ficke.**

14:05: Epidemic *Phytophthora* diseases of forests and natural ecosystems and the importance of the nursery pathway. 20 min – **Thomas Jung** (Mendel University in Brno, Czechia).

14:25: Best management practices to produce plants free of *Phytophthora* in nurseries for forest restoration. 20 min – **Bruno Scanu** (University of Sassari, Italy).

14:45: Towards healthier nurseries: effective and sustainable strategies for *Phytophthora* management in horticulture. 20 min – **Ana Pérez-Sierra** (IVIA, Valencia, Spain).

15:05: **Coffee break** (15 minutes).

15:20: *Phytophthora* in British nurseries; identifying risk and which 'best practices' are best. 20 min – **Sarah Green** (Forest Research, Northern Research Station, Roslin, UK).

15:40: Preventing *Phytophthora* spread on native and horticultural plants in California. 20 min – **Tyler Bourret** (PhytoWorld LLC, Seattle, USA) & **Susan Frankel** (USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station, retired).

16:00: Plant Healthy: the value of a voluntary nursery certification scheme. 20 min – **Malcolm Catlin** (Director, Plant Healthy scheme).

16:20: **Questions** (raised via the chat and selected by the moderator) and **Discussion.**

16:50: **Conclusion.**

17:00: End of the webinar.

Participation is free; please register here.

PurPest (Grant No. 101060634) is funded by the European Union under HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-04 – Tackling outbreaks of plant pests.

The pathway of invasive *Phytophthora* pathogens from nurseries via planting activities to natural forests and best nursery management practices. A–D. The root and collar rot epidemic of alder (*Alnus* spp.) trees across Europe. **A.** Healthy-looking *Alnus glutinosa* seedlings in a nursery. **B.** Development of a black collar rot (arrow) caused by *Phytophthora ×alni* in a healthy-looking *A. glutinosa* nursery plant with a previously suppressed infection after 1 week of flooding. **C.** Advancing bark canker (arrow) in a planted *A. glutinosa* tree caused by *P. ×alni*. **D.** Extensive mortality of a riparian *A. glutinosa* forest caused by *P. ×alni*. **E–F.** Cork oak (*Quercus suber*) decline in Southern Europe. **E.** Container stand on the ground of a nursery with several cork oak plants showing chlorosis or mortality due to root rot caused by *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. **F.** Cork oak afforestation with high mortality due to root rot caused by *P. cinnamomi*. **G–H.** Pine seedlings in containers close to the ground with chlorosis and mortality due to irrigation with untreated river water infested with several *Phytophthora* species. **I–J.** Healthy *Myrtus communis* seedlings with healthy root systems in containers on tables lifted >80 cm from the ground and irrigated with pathogen-free filtered water.

PurPest (Grant No. 101060634) is funded by the European Union under HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-04 – Tackling outbreaks of plant pests.