EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

Plant Health Newsletter on HORIZON SCANNING

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Science, safe food, sustainability

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Introduction

Following a request from the European Commission[1], EFSA provides here the Horizon Scanning Newsletter summarising the monthly results of the horizon scanning activity for threats in the field of plant health, that were published on the web during the previous month (e.g. the newsletter of February 2024 covers the period 1-31 January 2024). The aim is to identify in a timely manner relevant information on plant pests that might be of concern to the EU and therefore may require consideration by risk assessors and risk managers. This newsletter will first of all serve the EC and Member States in addressing phytosanitary questions and, for this reason, attention is given in avoiding duplicating information already provided to National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPOs) by official channels, such as the EPPO Bulletin[2]. Moreover, it will benefit professionals working in the field and the informed public, to which is also dedicated the interactive dashboard in the EFSA website[3].

The monitoring system is based on the automatic public health surveillance platform MEDISYS (Medical Information System), scanning more than 25,000 sources in 79 languages from 204 countries, covering all world's regions. At this moment, 2,762 plant pests (pests regulated in the EU, pests listed by EPPO and new plant pests) have been daily monitored in media, scientific literature and social media (EFSA, 2021[4] and data from September 2021).

The monitored plant pest species include:

1 regulated pests listed in Annexes IIA and IIB of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072[5] and later amendments, in other EU plant health legal acts or present in the EPPO Alert, A1 and A2 lists.

2 Pests not regulated in the EU neither part of EPPO lists.

3 Newly identified taxa.

A dedicated EFSA working group meets once a month[6] with the support of EFSA staff and contractors, in order to compose and validate the content of the newsletter: the articles to be included, the main issues, the PeMo scoring and the brief text summarizing the content of each item. The EPPO Global Database[7], CABI Crop Protection Compendium[8] and previous EFSA outputs[9] are fundamental tools supporting this decision process.

[1] European Commission – Directorate General for Health and Food Safety, Request to provide a scientific and technical assistance on a horizon scanning exercise in view to crisis preparedness on plant health for the EU territory (M-2017-0012, EFSA-Q-2017-00037).

[2] EPPO Bulletin accessible from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/13652338

[3] The Horizon Scanning Dashboard is accessible from https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/powerbi/plant-health-horizon-scanning-dashboard

[4] EFSA (European Food Safety Authority), Mannino M R, Larenaudie M, Linge J P, Candresse T, Jaques Miret J A, Jeger M J, Gachet E, Maiorano A, Muñoz Guajardo I, Stancanelli G, 2021. Horizon Scanning for Plant Health: report on 2017-2020 activities. EFSA supporting publication 2021:EN-2010. 113 pp. doi:10.2903/sp.efsa.2021.EN-2010

[5] Commission implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072 of 28 November 2019 establishing uniform conditions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 of the European Parliament and the Council, as regards protective measures against pests of plants, and repealing Commission Regulation (EC) No 690/2008 and amending Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/2019. Official Journal of the European Union L 319, latest consolidated version.

[6] Minutes of the meetings are available here https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/wgs/plant-health/wg-plh-horizon-scanning.pdf

[7] EPPO, 2023. EPPO Global Database (available online). https://gd.eppo.int

[8] CABI, 2023. Crop Protection Compendium. Wallingford, UK: CAB International. www.cabi.org/cpc

[9] EFSA Journal https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/

The newsletter is composed of two parts:

1. The summary table where the selected items of the month are given: the main order is by category of pest according to EU regulation, followed by the alphabetical order of the pest species. For each pest, information on its taxonomical identity, host range and biology, distribution and topic of the selected article(s) is provided. Furthermore, icons and bookmarks support the navigation of the newsletter. An active link is available within the topic of each item, to open the original article which triggered its selection.
2. The list of the references connected to each item.

1. Summary

Table legend					
Category	**PeMoScoring**	**Host range**	**Main hosts**	**Damage**	**EU distribution**
Bacteria	Negative PeMo scoring	Monophagous / One host plant	Fruit plants	Qualitative losses	Present in the EU
Fungi and oomycetes	Positive PeMo scoring	Oligophagous / Restricted range of host plants	Vegetables	Quantitative losses	Absent from the EU
Insects and mites		Polyphagous / Wide range of host plants	Cereals	Damage leading to plant death	
Molluscs			Oil and fibre plants	V Vector	
Nematodes			Forest plants		
Viruses, viroids and phytoplasmas			Ornamental and flower plants		
			Other plants		

→ Main issues of the month: this icon highlights items that have been identified as the most relevant for EU plant health system among those included in the newsletter. In the case of "not listed" pests, it corresponds to pests which scored positive by PeMo screening.

Pest	Hosts range	Main hosts	Damage and symptoms	EU regulatory status and distribution	Topic
Colletotrichum theobromicola	Olive (*Olea europaea*), onion (*Allium fistulosum*), cassava (*Manihot esculenta*), acerola (*Malpighia emarginata*), *Buxus* spp., cyclamen (*Cyclamen persicum*).		Dieback of twigs with light tan coloured foliage.	Not listed ✕ Absent from the EU	New host plant [1]
	The fungal pathogen *Colletotrichum theobromicola* has been identified for the first time as the cause of anthracnose on raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*), specifically in planting material of Italian origin. Molecular and morphological analyses confirmed the pathogen's identity and pathogenicity tests reproduced disease symptoms, fulfilling Koch's postulates. This report adds *C. theobromicola* to the list of known *Colletotrichum* species causing raspberry anthracnose, often attributed to *C. fioriniae*, *C. acutatum*, *C. rubicola*, and *C. neorubicola*. Pest Categorisation published by EFSA in August 2022: https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/7529				
***Dichorhavirus orchidaceae* (= *Orchid fleck virus*)**	*Citrus* spp., *Phalaenopsis* hybrids.		Chlorotic spots, necrotic flecks.	Not listed ✕ Absent from the EU	First finding and new host plant [2]
	Orchid fleck virus (OFV), a mite-borne virus, was probably present in orchids in a number of countries in the past but its current distribution is reported as rather limited, in particular in Europe. The article reports its identification in *Veronica spicata* and *Dendrochilum magnum*, symptomatic plants collected in a botanical garden in the UK in 2018, thus extending the known host range and geographical distribution of OFV.				

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Erwinia pyrifoliae</td><td>Oriental pear tree (Pyrus pyrifolia), apple (Malus domestica) and strawberry (Fragaria ananassa).</td><td>Black-brown stripes and spots on the leaves and necrotic petioles, blossoms and fruitlets comparable to fire blight.</td><td>Not listed
✔ NL</td><td>First finding [3]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Erwinia pyrifoliae is a new Erwinia species described in 1999. It is closely related to E. amylovora but distinct from it. E. pyrifoliae has been shown to be pathogenic to oriental pear, apple and strawberry and to have a limited geographic distribution. The article reports its first detection in symptomatic strawberries in Ohio (USA) in December 2023, thus extending the known geographical distribution of this pathogen.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Ilyonectria charruensis sp. nov.</td><td>Eucalyptus smithii</td><td>Root rot.</td><td>Not listed
✕ Absent from the EU</td><td>New pest and new host plant [4]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">In Uruguay, surveys identified Nectriaceae species associated with root rot in Eucalyptus smithii trees with a total of 25 isolates collected from commercial fields and nurseries. Morphological and molecular analyses identified three species: Calonectria pauciramosa, Dactylonectria novozelandica, and a novel species, Ilyonectria charruensis. Pathogenicity tests demonstrated that all three species significantly reduced the growth of E. smithii seedlings, confirming their role in root rot disease.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Jacobiasca lybica</td><td>Grapevine (Vitis vinifera), Citrus spp., tomato (Solanum lycopersicum), eggplant (S. melongena), potato (S. tuberosum).</td><td>Infested leaves change color, appear scorched and often curl downwards. Stem and leaves discoloration.</td><td>Not listed
✔ ES, GR, IT, PT</td><td>New finding [5]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">The insect is a longtime inhabitant of vineyards in southern EU (Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain). The pest was already found in Corsica in 2023 and is now been reported in the mediterranean part of continental France.</td></tr>
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<table>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Leptosphaerulina australis</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Not listed
✔ ES</td><td>New host plant [6]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Alfalfa (Medicago sativa), annual bluegrass (Poa annua), creeping bentgrass (Agrostis palustris).</td><td>Leaf spot disease.</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">The fungus Leptosphaerulina australis has been reported for the first time as the causative agent of leaf spot disease in maize (Zea mays). In August 2021, leaf spot symptoms were observed in maize plants in Lancang, Yunnan, China, with disease incidence of up to 76 %. Molecular analysis confirmed the identity of the pathogen as L. australis, and Koch’s postulates were successfully fulfilled. While L. australis has been previously isolated from turfgrass, alfalfa, and soil, this is its first identification on maize.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Neopestalotiopsis rosae</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Not listed
✔ ES, PT</td><td>First finding [7]
First finding [8]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Tangerine (Citrus reticulata), strawberry (Fragaria ananassa), pomegranate (Punica granatum), blueberry (Vaccinium sp.).</td><td>Necrosis and dieback.</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">The emerging fungal pathogen Neopestalotiopsis rosae was identified for the first time in Albania, affecting greenhouse grown strawberries. Infected plants displayed symptoms including leaf necrosis, root rot, wilting, and light to dark brown spots on ripe fruits. Molecular and morphological analyses confirmed the presence of N. rosae with pathogenicity tests successfully fulfilling Koch’s postulates.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">The fungal species N. rosae has been reported for the first time as causes of leaf spot and stem dieback in lingonberry (Vaccinium vitis-idaea). In 2021 and 2022, brown necrotic leaves and stem dieback symptoms were observed on lingonberry plants at the St. John’s Research and Development Centre in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. The pathogen along with N. zimbabwana were identified through morphological analysis and genetic sequencing, and pathogenicity assays confirmed that isolates of both species could induce disease symptoms in lingonberries.</td></tr>
</table>

Neopestalotiopsis zimbabwana 	  Tasmanian bluegum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) and wart-stemmed pincushion (*Leucospermum cuneiforme*).		 Leaf necrosis, stem girdling, cutting dieback, and leaf spot and stem dieback.	Not listed ✔ PT	First finding [8]
	The fungal species *N. zimbabwana* has been reported for the first time as causes of leaf spot and stem dieback in lingonberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*). In 2021 and 2022, brown necrotic leaves and stem dieback symptoms were observed on lingonberry plants at the St. John's Research and Development Centre in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. The pathogen along with *N. rosae* were identified through morphological analysis and genetic sequencing, and pathogenicity assays confirmed that isolates of both species could induce disease symptoms in lingonberries.				
***Ophiostoma juglandis* sp. nov.** 	  Walnut (*Juglans regia*).		 Walnut decline.	Not listed ✔ CZ	New pest [9]
	The study describes the identification of a new fungal species, *Ophiostoma juglandis*, which is associated with the invasive bark beetle *Dryocoetes himalayensis* and linked to the decline of walnut trees in Czechia. This fungus was isolated from necrotic wood surrounding beetle galleries. Pathogenicity tests confirmed the aggressiveness of *O. juglandis* toward both *Juglans regia* and *J. nigra* plants.				
Polerovirus PABYV (= Pepo aphid-borne yellows virus)	  Watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*), melon (*Cucumis melo*), pumpkin (*Cucurbita pepo*).		 Leaf crumpling, yellowing and downward curling.	Not listed ✔ ES, GR, IT	Epidemiology [10]
	Pepo aphid-borne yellows virus (PABYV) is an aphid-transmitted virus first identified in Mali in 2014 and later shown to infect cucurbit crops in several African countries, in Greece and, recently in Italy and, as a first report in Spain. The article reports its widespread presence in Spanish cucurbit crops including watermelon, zucchini, melon, pumpkin and cucumber. The authors were able to trace back its introduction in Spain to 2018 and its constant progression in prevalence since then, showing that PABYV is an emerging threat to cucurbit crops.				

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Eutetranychus orientalis
  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>EPPO A2 list
✔ CY, ES, GR, NL</td><td>First finding [11]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Olive (Olea europaea), Citrus spp., Prunus spp., apple (Malus domestica), sunflower (Helianthus annuus), sweet potato (Ipomoea batatas), pear (Pyrus communis), walnut (Juglans regia), Ficus sp., Morus sp.</td><td>Chlorotic leaves, pale yellow streaks along midrib and veins. Stippling and later silvering on the rind of citrus fruit.</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">This article reports the first finding of E. orientalis in Sicilian citrus orchards. This mite pest had already been recorded in 2001 in the EU (Greece and Spain) and several other non-EU countries in the Mediterranean Basin (Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Serbia, Tunisia, Türkiye).</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Anoplophora glabripennis
  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>Priority pest
✔ FR</td><td>New finding [12]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Fagus spp., Acer spp., Betula spp., Populus spp.</td><td>Oviposition holes, exit holes, oozing sap, frass, wood shavings, and galleries.</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">A live Asian longhorn beetle was found in Marly, canton of Fribourg, Switzerland, a location where the beetle had been eradicated in 2019. According to EPPO GD, the status of this insect in Switzerland is "Present, under eradication (2022-09)".</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Bursaphelenchus xylophilus
  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>Priority pest
✔ ES, PT</td><td>Control measure [13]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Picea spp., Pinus spp., Douglas fir (Pseudotsuga menziesii), Abies spp., Larix spp., Cedrus spp.</td><td>Discolouration and wilting of needles, leading to death of tree. Timber staining.</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">The study assessed the effectiveness of vacuum and steam heat treatments for B. xylophilus in naturally infested pine logs. Among the three treatment protocols tested, the most effective one (60 °C for 60 minutes) reduced nematode populations to statistically zero, however, it did not completely eradicate all nematodes. In addition, surviving individuals were observed to increase in number after treatment. This indicates that further refinement of the protocol is essential to achieve complete eradication.</td></tr>
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<table>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Xylella fastidiosa</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Priority pest</td><td rowspan="2">First finding [14]

New host plant [15]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Very large host range including herbaceous and woody plants. Among them important EU crops such as Citrus spp., olive (Olea europaea), almond (Prunus dulcis), grapevine (Vitis vinifera).</td><td>Dieback, reduced growth, death. Asymptomatic in some plants.</td><td>✔ ES, FR, IT, PT</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">There is only very limited information available on the potential presence of Xylella fastidiosa in China, with a single 2001 report. The article reports the identification of X. fastidiosa subsp. multiplex in walnut trees (Juglans regia L.) with leaf scorch symptoms in Xinjiang, China, thus confirming presence of the bacteria in China.

The second article reports the analysis of plants for a collection of New Zealand indigenous plants (130 species comprising 72 genera), growing in a X. fastidiosa-infected area of California (USA). Plants from 9 species were found infected by variants of X. fastidiosa subsp. multiplex. The results identify new natural hosts of X. fastidiosa but also highlight the interest the approach used to identify species susceptible to X fastidiosa in the flora of regions from which the bacterium is absent.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Begomovirus citrulli (= Watermelon chlorotic stunt virus)</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Quarantine pest</td><td rowspan="2">New finding [16]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Watermelon (Citrullus lanatus), tomato (Solanum lycopersicum), cantaloupe (Cucumis melo).</td><td>Yellow veins, chlorotic mottling, stunting of young leaves</td><td>✕ Absent from the EU</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Watermelon chlorotic stunt virus (WmCSV) is a whitefly-borne begomovirus (Geminiviridae) that causes severe diseases to cucurbits, particularly watermelon, across Eastern Mediterranean countries.It had recently been identified in watermelon and Opuntia cacti in Mexico and from a few plants in a botanical garden in Arizona in 2021. The article reports its frequent presence in watermelon and melon in commercial fields in Arizona and California, thus extending WmCSV known geographical distribution.</td></tr>
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<table>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Lycorma delicatula
  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>Quarantine pest</td><td rowspan="2"><u>Risk assessment</u> [17]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Wide host range of woody plants, apple (Malus domestica), Prunus spp., Vitis spp., Acer spp., Populus spp., Betula spp., Juglans spp.</td><td>Wilting leaves, dieback, weakened plants.</td><td>✕ Absent from the EU</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">This article reports the development of an ensemble species distribution model using three algorithms to assess the potential establishment of L. delicatula under current and future climate conditions in Europe. Authors conclude that neither climate conditions (current and future) nor the availability of host plants pose a barrier to the establishment of L. delicatula in most of the EU.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Ralstonia solanacearum
  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>Quarantine pest</td><td rowspan="2"><u>New finding</u> [18]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Eggplant (Solanum melongena), tomato (S. lycopersicum), potato (S. tuberosum), Capsicum spp., Cucumis spp., Cucurbita spp.</td><td>Foliage wilting, plant dieback and death, brown rot of tubers for potatoes.</td><td>✔ BE, BG, DE, ES FR, IT, RO, RS, PT, SK</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Ralstonia solanacearum has previously been recorded in Sardinia in 2007 and 2009 but eradicated thanks to successful efforts. The media article reports its discovery in september 2024 in a total of 4 potato fields following the efforts of the regional phytosanitary service.</td></tr>
<tr><td>General interest</td><td colspan="5"><u>Invasapp, una aplicació mòbil per a detectar insectes invasors</u> [19]
Invasapp, a mobile application to detect invasive insects

This article reports the launching of 'Invasapp', a citizen science app developed to allow the early detection of 24 potential invasive pests for the Balearic Islands. Among them, several plant pests like Anthonomus eugenii, Anoplophora glabripennis, Cydalima perspectalis, or Rhagoletis pomonella.</td></tr>
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Disclaimer

The selection of articles reflects the media and scientific coverage during the one-month time period in question. It does not reflect EFSA opinion on the articles' content, the presence of plant pests in a particular country and/or concerning a particular plant or plant product and/or endorsement of proposed control practices.

Note to the reader

This newsletter combines and substitutes the two pre-existent monthly publications: "Plant Health Newsletter: Media Monitoring" (58 published items) and "Plant Health Newsletter: Scientific Literature Monitoring" (37 published items), all accessible from the EFSA Virtual Issue "Horizon Scanning for Plant Health"

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For feedback on this Newsletter please write to

PLANTS@efsa.europa.eu