

BACTERIAL CANKER OF POPLAR AND WILLOW



Symptoms of bacterial canker of poplar with oozing sap (left) and necrotic water-soaked internal stem tissue (right) - Serbia.

Courtesy M. Zlatkovic



Poplar trees with crown dieback symptoms (left) - Serbia.

Courtesy M. Zlatkovic



Lesions and oozing on the stem of corkscrew willow - China.

Courtesy Y. Li

Causal organism: *Lonsdalea populi*

Host species

Poplar hybrid clones, including *Populus x euramericana* and *Populus x interamericana*, and corkscrew willow (*Salix matsudana*) are susceptible to bacterial canker.

Distribution

Bacterial canker of poplar is found in large parts of Europe (Hungary, Portugal, Serbia and Spain) and is widely distributed in China, whereas the disease on willow has only been reported in parts of China.

Occurrence in the UK

L. populi has not been detected in the UK.

Symptoms of the disease

The disease is initially characterised by longitudinal cracks in the bark typically on the lower trunk, with clear or whitish sap oozing from the canker. As the disease progresses, the cracks become enlarged with the underlying vascular tissues becoming necrotic and water-soaked. The exudate becomes sticky and foamy with a sour odour and darkens when exposed to air, staining the bark. The underlying lesions are sticky with a creamy mass of oozing exudate. In severe cases, crown die-back occurs and the diseased trees die within weeks. This disease primarily affects timber quality and can lead to tree mortality.

Control measures

Due to the severity of the disease, eradication measures are applied. These include insecticide treatment of the trees to prevent spread of inoculum by insects, and uprooting and incineration of the infected trees.

Status: Based on preliminary assessments, statutory action may be taken against disease findings.

