

Pest Alert: '*Candidatus Phytoplasma mali*'



Figure 1. Healthy apple tree branch (left) and branch infected with '*Ca. Phytoplasma mali*' (right) © Paul Martens via EPPO Global



Figure 2. Healthy apple fruit (left) and fruits reduced in size due to infection (right) © Dr. Federico Bondaz, Plant Protection Unit of Val d'Aosta region (IT) via EPPO Global Database

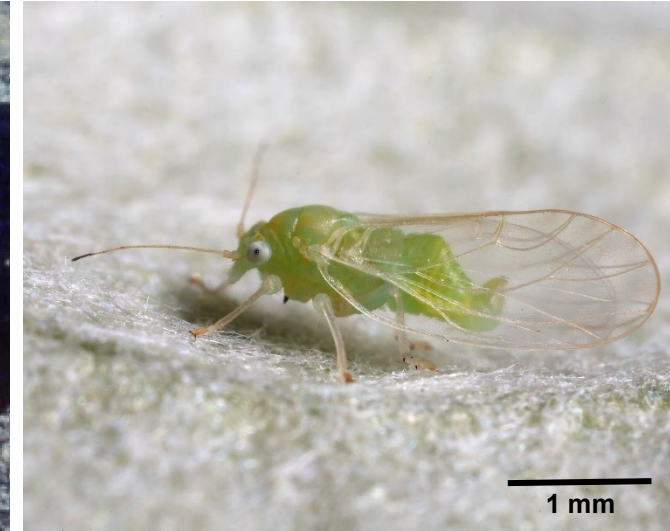


Figure 3. *Cacopsylla mali*, a vector of '*Ca. Phytoplasma mali*' © Brian Valentine

- '*Candidatus Phytoplasma mali*' ('*Ca. Phytoplasma mali*') is a phytoplasma which causes **apple proliferation disease** which affects a range of cultivars of **apple** and **crab apples**. It is found in the **phloem of infected trees** and **cannot survive without its host**.
- The disease is **native and widespread in Europe**, but **absent from the UK** after the eradication of a finding of apple proliferation disease on an apple tree in Essex in 1978. **Infected plants for planting** are considered the main pathway for the pathogen to enter the UK.
- The phytoplasma can be spread by phloem feeding planthoppers, leafhoppers and psyllids like ***Cacopsylla mali* (apple psyllid)** and ***Cacopsylla melanoneura*** which are **both present in the UK**.
- Symptoms of apple proliferation disease include **flower sterility; excessive proliferation and witches broom symptoms; internode elongation; early leaf reddening, enlarged stipules, stunting; and reductions in fruit size and quality**.

If you suspect the presence of the pest, please inform the relevant authority (see over for details).

For finds at orchards, garden centres, plant nurseries or private gardens:

For **England and Wales**, contact your local **APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspector** or the **PHSI Headquarters**, York.

Tel: 0300 1000 313

Email: planthealth.info@apha.gov.uk

For **Scotland**, contact the **Scottish Government's Horticulture and Marketing Unit**:

Email: hort.marketing@gov.scot

For **Northern Ireland**, contact the **DAERA Plant Health Inspection Branch**:

Tel: 0300 200 7847 Email: planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk

Web: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/plant-and-tree-health>

For finds in the wider environment:

In GB, please use Tree Alert: <https://treealert.forestresearch.gov.uk/>

For NI, please use TreeCheck: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/about-treecheck>

For additional information on UK Plant Health please see:

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/pests-and-diseases/uk-plant-health-risk-register/>

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/plant-health-controls>

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/plant/PlantHealth/PlantDiseases>

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk>