

Pest Alert: Potato spindle tuber viroid (PSTVd)



Figs. 1 – 3 from L-R: Potato tubers displaying symptoms of Potato spindle tuber viroid on the left with healthy tubers on the right. An infected potato plant displaying stunted growth (© EPPO Global Database). An infected tomato plant with yellowing leaves and stunted growth (© Crown Copyright, Courtesy of Fera Science Ltd).

- **Potato spindle tuber viroid (PSTVd)** is a serious pathogen of potato and tomato. Infection reduces yield and market quality.
- The viroid is present around the world. Many countries have eradicated outbreaks, including the UK. However, the pathogen can be symptomless in many host plants and escape detection.
- The main hosts are potato, tomato, pepper and related ornamental plants. Infected potato plants are often **stunted** and produce **small** and **misshaped tubers**, but symptoms can vary depending on potato variety and growing conditions. Stunted tomato plants may **yellow** and **stop producing fruit**. Ornamental plants generally do not show signs of disease.
- The viroid moves long distances by **infected plants, tubers, and seed**. Spread within a crop or region can occur by **contact**, such as with contaminated tools or machinery. PSTVd is also spread by **pollen** or certain **insects**.

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



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Department of
Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

For finds at garden centres, plant nurseries or private gardens in England and Wales, contact your local APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspector, or the PHSI headquarters, in York:

Tel: 0300 1000 313

Email: planthealth.info@apha.gov.uk

For **Scotland**, contact the **Scottish Government**:

Agricultural crops contact the local RPID officer: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/AOcontacts/contacts>

For non-agricultural crops, 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 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>