

Ceratocystis fimbriata

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) sets the import conditions that must be met when importing live plant material into New Zealand. The import conditions are put in place to prevent new pests and diseases that may threaten New Zealand's environment, economy, or human health from entering New Zealand.

MPI have recently become aware that a fungal disease of plants, *Ceratocystis fimbriata*, poses a threat to environmentally and economically important plants in New Zealand, including pohutukawa, rata and kiwifruit. Based on this information, MPI have changed the import conditions for plant species that are known hosts of the pathogen.

The measures come into effect on 10th December 2015, so all importers must make sure that any nursery stock of affected species that is imported after this date meets the new import requirements. A list of the affected species and a summary of the new import conditions is included below.

What is *Ceratocystis fimbriata*?

C. fimbriata is an emerging fungal pathogen with a broad (and expanding) host range, that is known to be transported on nursery stock. The fungus affects at least 40 plant genera and has been reported from more than 35 countries worldwide. In Brazil, the fungus has been identified as killing kiwifruit vines, with mortality of between 10-30% in affected orchards. More recently in Hawaii, the fungus has killed large numbers of mature 'ōhi'a trees in native forests and residential areas. 'Ōhi'a belongs to the *Metrosideros* genus; in New Zealand this genus includes the environmentally significant species of pohutukawa and rata. As illustrated below, the disease has been reported as rapidly killing nearly 100% of 'ōhi'a trees in infected stands in Hawaii.



Figure 1 Example of dieback in 'ōhi'a forest in Hawaii, attributed to infection by *C. fimbriata*. Photos were taken before (2008) and after (2012) infection was observed. Photo obtained from the U.S. Forest Service website at http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3845277.pdf

What are the changes to the import requirements?

Because the fungus is known to be transported on nursery stock, the import health standard (IHS) 155.02.06: Importation of Nursery stock has been urgently amended, with full implementation of the measures taking place on Thursday 10th December 2015.

A new section, section 2.2.1.8, has been added to the IHS. This section describes the phytosanitary requirements that must be met for all nursery stock hosts of *C. fimbriata* that are eligible for import into New Zealand. The changes apply to the following plant genera:

- *Acacia*
- *Actinidia*
- *Alocasia*
- *Ananas*
- *Annona*
- *Betula*
- *Carya*
- *Cassia*
- *Celtis*
- *Citrus*
- *Colocasia*
- *Corymbia*
- *Eriobotrya*
- *Erythrina*
- *Eucalyptus*
- *Fagus*
- *Ficus carica*
- *Inga*
- *Juglans*
- *Mangifera*
- *Metrosideros*
- *Metroxylon*
- *Ostrya*
- *Passiflora*
- *Pimenta*
- *Populus*
- *Protea*
- *Prunus*
- *Punica*
- *Quercus*
- *Schizolobium*
- *Schotia*
- *Spathodea*
- *Styrax*
- *Syngonium*
- *Tilia*
- *Ulmus*
- *Xanthosoma*

As described [in the IHS](#), all plant material must either be sourced from a country recognised by MPI as being free from *C. fimbriata*, or must be obtained from a 'pest free area' or 'pest free place of production'. An additional declaration verifying the source of the material must be endorsed on the phytosanitary certificate. Where a pest free area or pest free place of production declaration is obtained, material must also be tested for *C. fimbriata* during the post entry quarantine period. Testing must be done at an MPI approved diagnostic facility.

The above measures do not apply to tissue cultures or seed for sowing. This is because the pathogen is not likely to be present on this type of material.

Any consignment that arrives in New Zealand with phytosanitary certification issued on or after 10th December 2015 must meet the revised requirements for *C. fimbriata*. If the required additional declarations are not endorsed on the phytosanitary certificate the importer will be given the option of reshipping or destroying the affected material.

More information

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