

16

Informing authorities about new pest records on woody plants

R. Eschen

The aim of sentinel plantings is the detection of new, or unknown pest-host associations before these pests arrive in a new area, but the monitoring of sentinel plantings may also reveal attack of exotic plant species by native organisms. Previous studies in sentinel plantings indicate that it may be possible to find pests on previously unknown hosts with relatively little effort, which both highlights the value of this tool and indicates that new harmful organisms may be identified that require the attention of the authorities. The data collected may therefore be of interest to the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) and it is recommended to inform them of any interesting or suspicious findings.

NPPOs work to protect plants, forest ecosystems and plant-based livelihoods of a country and to facilitate safe international trade with plants and plant products. To do this, they operate a country's phytosanitary legislation, regulations and procedures, which includes inspection of forests and nurseries, inspection of imported plants and plant products in points of entry and implementation or coordination of measures when pest outbreaks are detected. NPPOs are often part of the Ministry of Agriculture or the Ministry of the Environment.

If regulated pests are found, the NPPO must be informed as soon as possible. This is important, because it helps in managing such damaging organisms and in protecting the natural resources of the country from further damage. Moreover, the presence of previously undocumented regulated organisms has implications for international trade and informing the NPPO can enable them to adequately manage risk. Early detection of potential phytosanitary problems is essential for this.

In some countries, it is obligatory to notify the NPPO of any new records of alien species, or of harmful species that are not commonly found in that country (i.e. it is written in the law). Hence, data about new pest records, including new pest-host relationships, or especially findings of regulated quarantine pests must be transmitted to the NPPO. In case of doubts, it is advisable to contact your NPPO. They may in certain cases be able to assist with the identification of the organisms that are found.