



**Yorkshire**  
Wildlife Trust

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Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

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## Tackling Ash dieback

A key problem we are currently tackling at many of our reserves is Ash Dieback. First confirmed in the UK in 2012, ash dieback has spread quickly and is now affecting woodlands across the UK, leading to the death of tens of thousands of trees. It is thought that in 10 years time, we will have lost 90% of ash trees here in Yorkshire. Ash dieback is devastating, similar to Dutch Elm disease 60 years ago, which wiped out a whole tree species.

80% of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust reserves contain ash trees, with the exception being coastal reserves and our smaller single-habitat reserves such as Pulfin Bog. Many of our woodland reserves, particularly in North Yorkshire are ash-dominant woods, such as Grass Wood near Skipton, and Ashberry near Helmsley.

During summer, our reserves teams survey all ash trees, looking for signs of dieback, and then mark the trees according to the progression of the disease. Those that have lost over 50% of leaf coverage will be earmarked for felling as once a tree is infected the disease is usually fatal, either directly or indirectly by weakening the tree to the point where it succumbs more readily to attacks by other pests or pathogens.

The disease spreads by wind dispersal and has no cure, but some trees are less susceptible than others. Some trees are showing good resistance to the disease so far, and these are marked as healthy. It is hoped that seeds from resistant trees will spread, repopulating areas with Ash, whilst other areas experience increasing species richness over time as new clearings open for younger plants to take a hold in the woodlands. Through allowing nature to be the solution we also keep decaying wood in the woodland system which is vital habitat for woodland animals, fungi and insects.



[ywt.org.uk](http://ywt.org.uk)

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is the only charity entirely dedicated to conserving, protecting and enhancing Yorkshire's wildlife and wild places

## The Project

We are vigilant at felling diseased trees that are nearby to footpaths, rights of way and buildings as the safety of visitors to our nature reserves is paramount. The infection makes Ash trees very brittle and unstable which poses a serious health and safety risk to the public, our staff and volunteers, especially in places where infected trees grow beside roads, buildings and footpaths.

We have already spent thousands of pounds reducing the risk of Ash trees on rights of way and there is plenty more to do. We are looking to restock and plant circa 300 trees where natural regeneration is not viable. We are also ensuring that essential bat habitat is maintained where possible and will install new bat roosts where these have been lost due to Ash dieback. Our teams will be monitoring the impact on the species composition of the affected woodlands and drawing up plans on how to best manage them for the future.

## Funding Request

<b>Core activity</b>	<b>Estimated costs</b>
1 – Felling of infected trees	£13,620
2 – Purchasing new trees	£1,200
3 – Purchasing new bat roosts	£180
<b>Total</b>	<b>£15,000</b>