

# Dieback

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## Phytophthora dieback and your project

Phytophthora dieback is a devastating plant disease caused by a group of microscopic soil-borne water moulds called Phytophthora.

The most common and widespread in the south west of Australia is the introduced species *Phytophthora cinnamoni*.

Western Australia's south-west provides ideal conditions and highly susceptible flora for this disease which has spread to more than one million hectares of rural and urban bushland, from Eneabba to Esperance.

More than 40 per cent of the region's native plant species are susceptible to the disease. It also affects many non-native plants including fruit trees and roses.

Infested areas usually have a sequence of deaths in highly susceptible plants such as banksias.

This leads to a loss of diversity and structure of affected plants, often resulting in large changes in the landscape and its ability to support native birds and animals.

### How Phytophthora spreads

Phytophthora lives in soil and is most commonly spread by human activities that move contaminated soil and plant material. Once it is present in an area, the disease spreads root-to-root between host plants and through drainage across catchments.



Common methods of spread for this disease include:

- infested soil on shoes, vehicles, equipment and machinery
- road works and earth moving using infested raw materials
- poor hygiene during bush regeneration, revegetation and other conservation activities
- rainfall and runoff within infested areas
- animal or stock movement.



### Your role in stopping the spread

It is your responsibility to ensure that your activities do not contribute to the spread of Phytophthora dieback.

We ask that you treat all sites as if dieback is already present and undertake the recommended hygiene practices which include:

- preventing the movement of soil, sand and gravel from one location to another unless certified as dieback free
- cleaning all machinery, equipment, boots after working on a site
- sticking to designated pathways and tracks where possible.

Other important dieback management practices include:

- only using plants from nurseries that have Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme accreditation
- only using materials (eg mulch, gravel, soil conditioners) from certified dieback free sources
- planting a diverse range of species in revegetation activities including dieback resistant species
- informing land management agencies of your project activities and any possible infestations of dieback that you find.

If there is a risk that your project may spread Phytophthora dieback, you must have the site mapped by a registered dieback interpreter and develop a hygiene management plan

to ensure you don't accidentally spread this disease.

### Dieback information and data management system

This online system, developed by Project Dieback, contains information and locations of known Phytophthora dieback infestations.

It's free and can be accessed through [www.dieback.net.au](http://www.dieback.net.au) under IT TOOLS.

A list of the top 100 priority protection areas across the south-west can also be found on this website.

### More information

[Dieback Working Group WA](#)

[Project Dieback](#)

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[Centre for Phytophthora Science and Management at Murdoch University](#)

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