

‘Non-priority pest or disease information notes’ are an occasional series of information sheets that highlight a new pest or disease that you might see when out carrying out routine surveys as part of your role as an Observatree volunteer. These are not a priority but any reports will be of interest to the Forest Research entomology and pathology teams.

Holm oak scale insect (*Nidularia pulvinata*)

Nidularia pulvinata, a scale insect pest of evergreen oaks in the Mediterranean, has been detected in London breeding on Holm oak (*Quercus ilex*), also known as Holly oak. This is the first known occurrence of this species in the UK.



Figure 1: (left) Ovisac masses forming whitish streaks on the trunk of a Holm oak and (right), felt-like whitish masses in the cracks of the bark (Crown copyright, Forest Research)

We are asking for Observatree volunteers to stay vigilant for the signs and symptoms of this pest, namely, the presence of whitish felt-like masses in the cracks of the bark on Holm oak trees. These are the egg sacs (‘ovisacs’) of the female scale insects, which remain on the tree for some time. This pest

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can be seen in the field all year round. Significant infestations can lead to dieback in the crown of the tree.



Figure 2: (left) dieback in the crown showing curling brown leaves on the tips of shoots and (right) general canopy decline of infested Holm oak trees (Crown copyright, Forest Research).

Note that this scale insect has the same scientific name as Pea-shaped Bird's Nest fungus which can yield confusing results when using a search engine online.

Reporting

Please report possible sightings via [TreeAlert](#).

Thank you in advance for your ongoing commitment to the health of our trees.

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