

# Improving biosecurity resources for professional operators

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## Introduction

- Professional Operators (those who move / handle / sell plants) have a regulatory responsibility to meet certain requirements when issuing Plant Passports (i.e. article 89 - *Authorisation of professional operators to issue plant passports* of the retained EU regulation 2016/2031).
- However, finding plant pest and disease information required to carry out these responsibilities is difficult due to the plethora and complexity of information available.
- Some Professional Operators are thus struggling to meet regulatory requirements.
- Presenting accessible, clear information on key plant pests will improve site pest risk management plans, improve supply chain biosecurity and in doing so help protect GB's ecosystems.

## Acknowledgements

This work was funded by the Scottish Government's Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services (RESAS) Division through the Centre of Expertise for Plant Health with supporting funding from Defra.

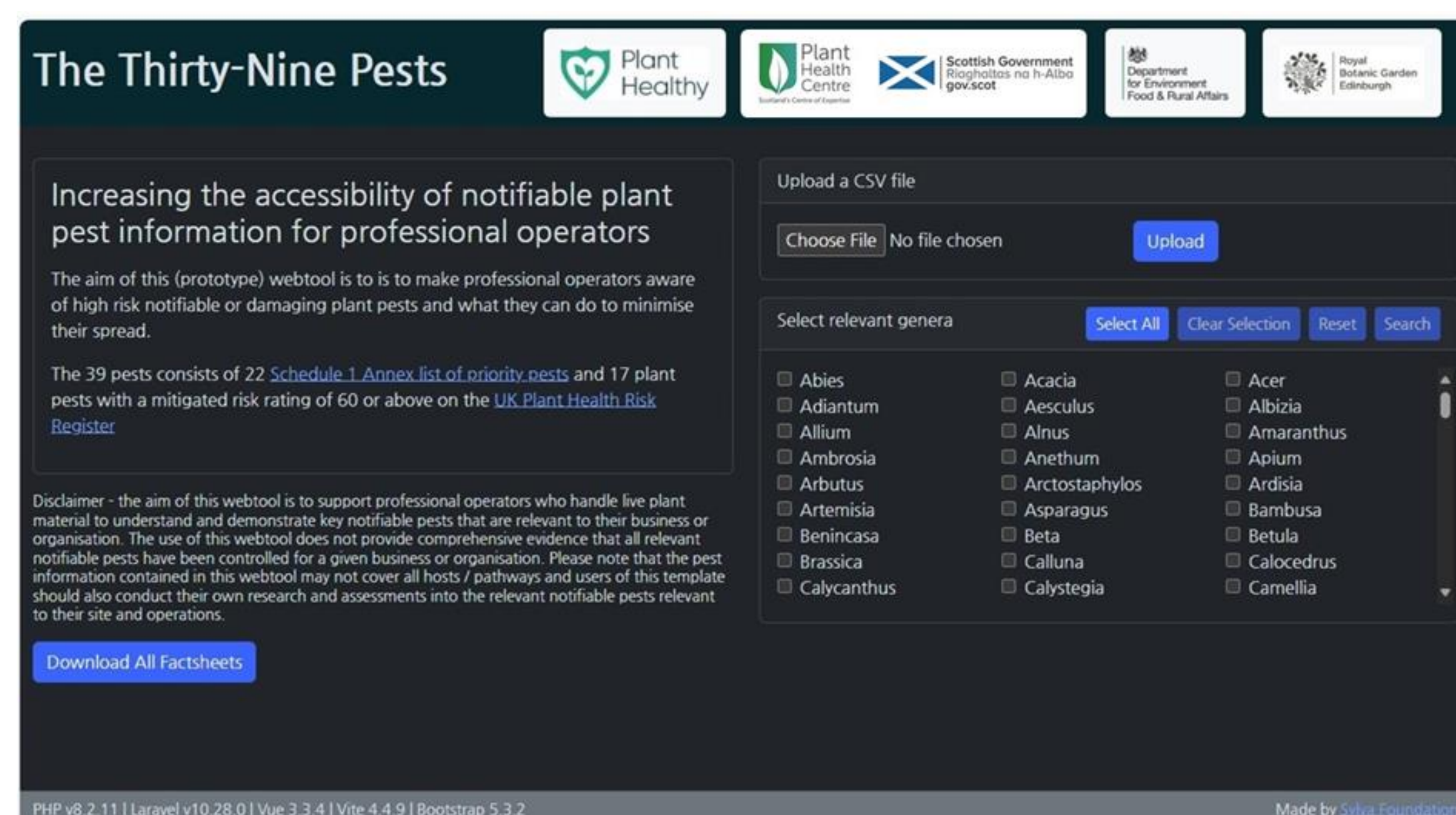


## Objectives

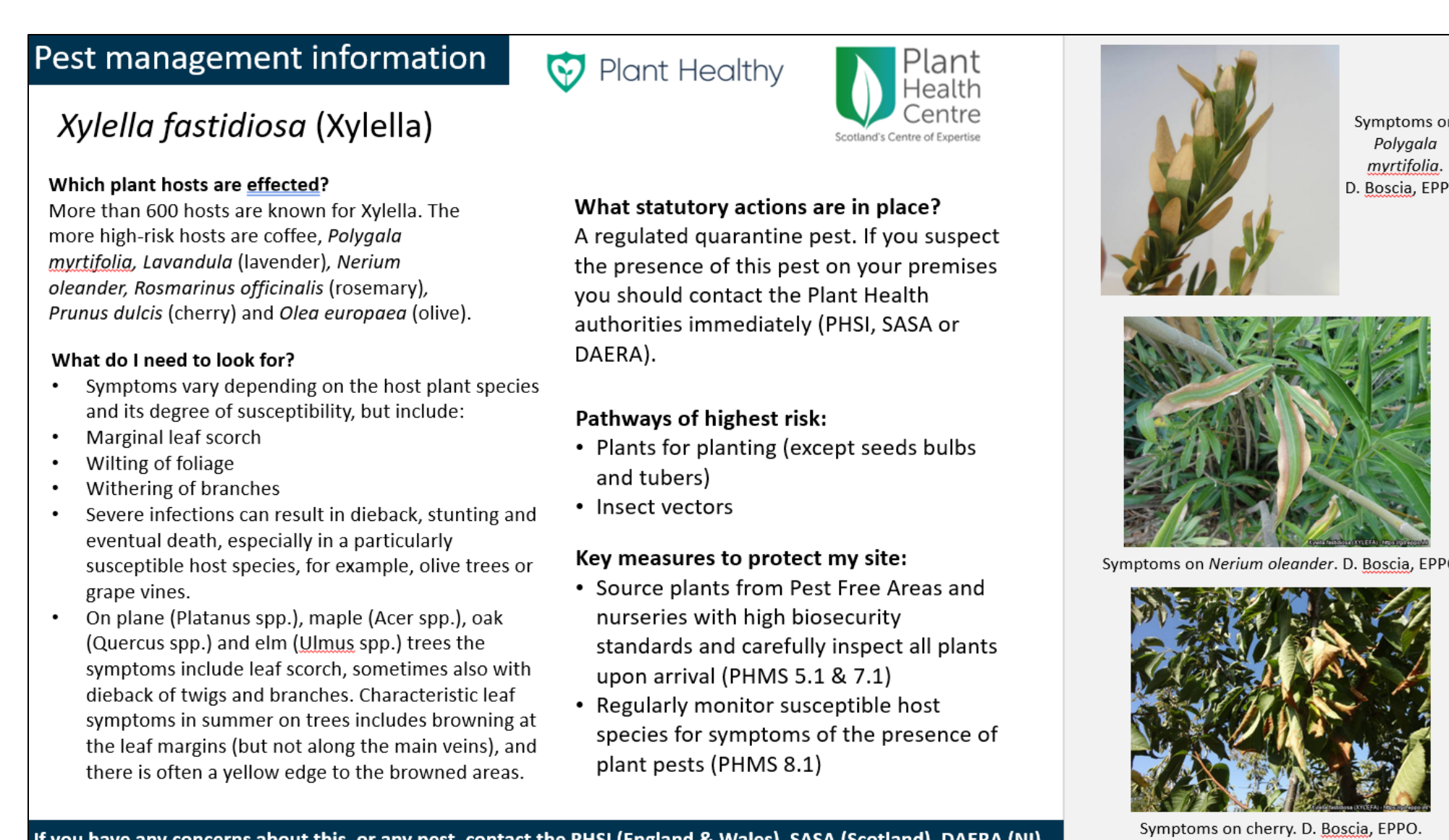
- Produce a prototype webtool which assists Professional Operators to conduct pest risk analyses of the highest risk notifiable plant pests, thereby ensuring that they meet the requirements of article 89.
- Ensure that the Plant Health Management Standard fully supports businesses and organisations establish effective *Pest risk management plans* and thereby meet article 91 (retained EU regulation 2016/2031).

## Project outcomes

- 39 relevant plant pests were selected – the 22 UK priority plant pests plus another 17 plant pests with a mitigated risk-rating of 60 or above on the UK Plant Health Risk Register (as of Oct 2023). This range of pests covers most types of plant pest – i.e. insects, nematodes, fungi, bacteria and viruses.
- A prototype webtool was produced where a user can upload a plant stocklist or select the relevant plant species from the list:



- The tool then presents the user with the relevant pest information sheets based on their selections, for example:



- This enables the user to understand and assess the risks associated with the notifiable pests and diseases specific to the plant species they are trading.

## Key messages

- With over 1,400 plant pests on the UK Plant Health Risk Register it can be challenging for Professional Operators to know where to start when identifying the notifiable plant pests that are relevant to their business or organisation.
- This project successfully produced a prototype webtool which enables users to assess and understand the notifiable pests that are relevant to the plants that they are trading. This is an important element of biosecurity, lowering the pest risk to GB businesses and wild landscapes.
- This webtool can now be incorporated into the suite of information which Plant Health Authorities provide to Professional Operators, e.g., on Defra's Plant Health Portal.