



Register for virtual Annual Diagnostics Workshop 2024-25 webinar 1

The National Plant Biosecurity Diagnostic Network (NPBDN) is delighted to announce that registrations are open for the virtual Annual Diagnostics Workshop (ADW) 2024-25.

Virtual ADW 2024-25 is exclusive to NPBDN members and will consist of four webinars held between November 2024 and April 2025. The first webinar will take place on Wednesday, 13 November.

The session will focus on plant virology, with an emphasis on tobamoviruses and more specifically tomato brown rugose fruit virus (ToBRFV).

Invited speakers:

- [Dr Adrian Fox](#) (Fera Scientific, United Kingdom)
- [Prof Rene van der Vlugt](#) (Wageningen University and Research, Netherlands)
- [Dr Fiona Constable](#) (Agriculture Victoria Research).

Additionally, two postgraduate students will present their current plant virology related research projects.

[Download the program](#)

Event details

- **Date:** Wednesday, 13 November 2024
- **Time:** 3.00pm – 5.30pm AEDT
- **Format:** Microsoft Teams

Registrations will close on **Friday, 8 November 2024**.
Registered attendees will receive a Microsoft Teams invitation
on Monday, 11 November 2024.

[Register now](#)



EOI to undertake various NDP-related work

National Diagnostic Protocols (NDPs) are an integral component of Australia's plant biosecurity system. The process of development is managed by the Subcommittee on Plant Health Diagnostics (SPHD).

SPHD is currently seeking expressions of interest from plant biosecurity diagnosticians or research scientists to undertake the following projects:

Review of the NDP

- *Phytophthora infestans* (exotic strains; potato late blight)

Verification of the NDP

- *Cicadulina mbila* (the South African maize leafhopper)
- *Hyalesthes obsoletus* (Cixiidae planthopper)

Review and verification of the NDP

- *Bursaphelenchus cocophilus* (red ring nematode)
- *Diaphorina citri* (Asian citrus psyllid)
- *Phyllosticta* spp. (banana freckle)

Update of draft NDP

- *Austropuccinia psidii* (myrtle rust)
- Exotic invasive snails (various)

[Learn more](#)

Revised reference standards for NDPs to strengthen plant biosecurity

SPHD has endorsed four revised reference standards that outline the nationally agreed processes for the development, review, verification and endorsement of NDPs.

[Learn more](#)

New endorsed NDPs on maize dwarf mosaic virus and “Cyst nematodes (The genus *Heterodera*)”

The [NDP 52](#) for maize dwarf mosaic virus (species: *Potyvirus zeananus*) and [NDP 53](#) for “Cyst nematodes (The genus *Heterodera*)” were endorsed by SPHD for use in the event of an incursion, providing an essential tool to strengthen Australia’s plant biosecurity.

Maize dwarf mosaic virus (MDMV) causes mosaic or mottle symptoms in hosts and is transmitted by a broad range of aphid species. Severe infections can result in stunted growth, increased tillering, and poor seed set. The field host range of MDMV includes maize (*Zea mays*), Johnsongrass (*Sorghum halepense*), and Sudan grass (*Sorghum sudanense*), although its potential host range is likely much broader based on tested experimental hosts.

Exotic cyst nematodes in the *Heterodera* genus are a pest group recognised on Australia’s top 42 National Priority Plant Pests (NPPP) list. With 88 obligate plant-parasitic species known globally, including only a very few in Australia, *Heterodera* spp. are devastating pests of important crops, causing both direct and indirect damage to plants by feeding and modifying root systems.

The endorsed NDP’s mark a key milestone in pest preparedness, equipping diagnosticians with standardised and reliable molecular and morphological methods.

For more information on NDP development, review, and verification, or other NDP-related queries, please contact NDPcoordinator@phau.com.au.



Symptoms of maize dwarf mosaic virus on maize (Image: [Craig Grau, Bugwood.org](https://www.bugwood.org))

Specimens from the Nematology section of the Australian National Insect Collection, CSIRO (Image: Akshita Jain)

Register for ACPPO webinar: Research on the brown marmorated stink bug

Australian Chief Plant Protection Officer (ACPPO), Dr Gabrielle Vivian-Smith, will chair a webinar on systematic applications for 21st-century biosecurity solutions. Presenters will discuss current research on the highly invasive brown marmorated stink bug (*Halyomorpha halys*).

Event details

- **Date:** Thursday, 28 November 2024
- **Time:** 2.00pm AEDT
- **Format:** Microsoft Teams

Presenters

- Professor Gerry Cassis and Dr Marcos Roca-Cusachs (University of New South Wales).
- Associate Professor Cristiano Schwertner (Federal University of Sao Paulo, Brazil)

[Read more](#)

Registrations now open for 25th APPS Conference

Registrations are now open for 25th Australasian Plant Pathology Society (APPS) Conference that will be held at the International Conference Centre in Sydney, NSW from 26 - 28 May 2025.

The conference will celebrate the role of scientific collections with the 2025 theme: *From Field to Future, Scientific Collections and Plant Pathology*.

Plant pathology collections are valuable to agriculture, ecology, and biosecurity, preserving specimens, and living cultures, from both economically and environmentally important plant species.

The conference will put the spotlight on these collections, highlighting their role in research and biosecurity and how they can be used and improved, to ensure they continue to be a vital resource for researchers and decision-makers into the future.

Earlybird rates are available until **Friday, 28 March 2025**.

[Register now](#)



Expressions of interest sought for a Morphological fungal identification techniques workshop

Dr Jordan Bailey from the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development is seeking expressions of interest to attend a Morphological fungal identification techniques workshop.

It is proposed that this workshop will be held shortly after the Australasian Plant Pathology Society (APPS) Conference 2025, which will run from 26 - 28 May 2025 at the International Conference Centre in Sydney. Please note that registration for the workshop is independent of the APPS 2025 Conference registration.

Event details

- **Date:** Friday, 30 May 2025 – Sunday, 1 June 2025
- **Trainer:** Megan Romberg, National Taxonomist (Mycology), USDA
- **Venue:** Technology Park, Redfern Sydney (TBC)
- **Cost:** \$500

[Learn more](#)

Upcoming biosecurity events

- [Virtual ADW 2024-25 webinar 1](#): Webinar | 13 November 2024
- [ACPPO webinar - Research into the BMSB](#): Webinar | 28 November 2024
- [International Advances in Plant Virology 2025](#): Murica, Spain | 8 – 11 April 2025
- [Australasian Plant Pathology Society Conference 2025](#): Sydney, NSW | 26 – 28 May 2025
- [5th International Congress on Biological Invasions](#): Perth, WA | 21 – 24 September 2025

Career opportunities

Visit the careers page on the NPBDN website to keep up to date with current job and postgraduate scholarship opportunities.

Job opportunities

- Macquarie University is seeking a Postdoctoral Research Fellow - Plant Virology and Vector Biology (apply before Tuesday, 12 November).
- The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is advertising for a Molecular Scientist (apply before Friday, 15 November).

Postgraduate opportunities

- La Trobe University is offering a scholarship for a PhD focused on *The application of near-field sequencing technology as a triage and surveillance tool to detect pests and pathogens.*
- Applied BioSciences at Macquarie University is advertising several scholarships on the research focus *Climate change and its effects on vector transmission of plant pathogens.*

[Visit careers](#)

Career profile

This month we are profiling Adrian Fox, who is the Lead Plant Virologist from Fera Science Ltd, York, United Kingdom.

Adrian has been in regulatory plant health for over 25 years, with 20 of those focused on plant virology.



[Read more](#)

About the Network

The National Plant Biosecurity Diagnostic Professional Development and Protocols Projects are coordinated and delivered by PHA and funded by DAFF. The objectives of the Projects are to enhance and strengthen Australia's diagnostic and surveillance capacity and capability to identify priority plant pests that impact on plant industries, environment and the community.

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