



Department
for Environment,
Food & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Department of
Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

helpline@defra.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

1 June 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Rapid Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) on *Orchidophilus* spp.

I am writing to seek your views on a UK Pest Risk Analysis for *Orchidophilus* spp. A link to the rapid PRA can be found at the website given below:

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/pests-and-diseases/pest-risk-analyses/>

We would welcome your views and comments on the PRA and the proposals for future action.

In submitting any comments you may wish to focus on the summary, key uncertainties and conclusion sections of the risk assessments and to consider the following:

- Are any factual corrections required?
- Your view on the appropriateness of the suggested proposals for future actions?
- Can you provide any additional information (or links to other sources of information) that may help address uncertainty identified in the assessment/management measures?
- Are there any risks that have not been adequately considered?
- Have you reviewed the risk assessment and consider that you have nothing further to add?

This review applies to the UK and is being conducted by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, with the agreement of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Government. The objective of this stakeholder engagement is to gather views from all interested sectors on the UK position. We will take all comments made into account in developing the UK position.



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Background

Orchidophilus is a genus of weevils (Family: Curculionidae; Subfamily: Baridinae) that currently contains 6 species: *O. aterrimus*, *O. epidendri*, *O. eburifer*, *O. insidiosus*, *O. peregrinator*, and *O. ran*. They feed and develop on species of orchids primarily in the subfamily Epidendroideae. They are native to southeast Asia and species such as *O. aterrimus* and *O. peregrinator* have spread to other countries such as Australia and Hawaii.

These pests develop by feeding of orchid plants, where immature stages are often found tunnelling within the pseudobulb of the orchid. Adults will also continuously feed on all parts of the plant, including flowers, leaves, the pseudobulb, and exposed roots. Feeding can lead to necrotic spots, reduction in flower production and quality, host weakening and, in severe cases, plant death.

The pathways assessed for this pest group were plants for planting of orchids and cut flowers, foliage and branches of orchids, which were rated as unlikely and very unlikely, respectively. The association of these species with orchid plants is likely and there is strong evidence of pest movement with trade. However, the volume of trade from countries with pest presence is small and the likelihood of transfer to an area capable of sustaining a population is thought to be low.

Due to the pest's current distribution in tropical countries, the UK climate is unlikely to support development. It is unknown whether native UK orchid species would be suitable hosts, as they lack the pseudobulb which is the preferred oviposition/development site. Therefore, outdoor establishment is rated as unlikely.

There are many sites within the UK that could sustain a population of orchid weevils such as botanical gardens, national plant collections, and specialist growers/retailers. These sites would contain suitable orchid species and conditions suitable for pest development. Establishment under protection is therefore rated as likely. However, many of these sites, especially botanical gardens and plant collections, would quarantine any new material and require inspections prior to movement, potentially limiting pest entry.

Damage caused by orchid weevils, such as necrosis or flower streaking, is likely to result in a loss of marketable plants or flowers. This is likely to affect nurseries, garden centres, wholesalers and private sellers. Economic impact is also likely from the methods used to control the weevil. Previous cases of control involved destruction of orchid plants and extended pesticide spray programmes, which would be costly. However, due to the relatively small size of the orchid industry in the UK and the limited damage reported from these pest species, the economic impact in the UK is rated as small.

Due to the pest's size and life strategy, if a population became established, containment and eradication would be difficult. Continued exclusion is therefore the preferred management option. In the case of establishment, sanitation (destruction of plants) and insecticides are the most effective control methods.

Recommendations for action

Statutory action is not recommended for this pest group. While considerable damage has been recorded from its native and introduced range, the likelihood of establishment in the UK is limited to protected structures that house a large number of tropical orchid plants. Introduction to these areas should be mitigated by biosecurity procedures such as quarantining of new material, especially for sites containing high value orchid plants.

All responses should be sent to plantpestrisks@defra.gov.uk

Responses should be received by **24 August 2026**.

Information provided in response to this stakeholder engagement, including personal information, may be made available to the public on request, in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental information Regulations 2004 (EIRs)

If you do not wish your response, including your name, contact details and any other personal information, to be publicly available, please say so clearly in writing when you send your response to the stakeholder engagement. Please note that if your computer automatically includes a confidentiality disclaimer, this will not count as a confidentiality request. Please explain why you need to keep details confidential. We will take your reasons into account if someone asks for the information under freedom of information legislation. However, we cannot guarantee that we will always be able to keep those details confidential.

Yours faithfully,

Richard McIntosh
Assistant Chief Plant Health Officer
Defra
T: +44 (0)208 026 2396
M: +44 (0)7767 357817
richard.mcintosh@defra.gov.uk