

Researchers find new ways to save the ash

The FraxNet meeting took place in Malmö in late August 2026 to discuss the conservation and future of the European ash tree. There are severe threats to the species, but there is also hope!

The decline of the ash constitutes a huge loss for the many associated species that benefit from ash trees in their native habitat, and for humans for both economic and ecologic reasons.

POLICY BRIEF 2026

TREE BREEDING





Don't give up on the ash trees!

New hope for the Nordic-Baltic ash forests

European ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees are suffering across Europe. An Asian fungus (*Hymenoscypha fraxineae*) is causing severe crown damage, increasing susceptibility to secondary infections and root rot and causing early mortality. Old ash trees are dying and young ash trees are rarely planted. The problems are most severe in forests, but trees in the open landscape are also affected.

The decline of the ash constitutes a huge loss for the stakeholders who grew ash trees for valuable furniture or various other purposes. It also affects people who treasure the presence of ash trees in their vicinity and the historical trees of national importance, as well as the many associated species that benefit from ash trees in their native habitat.

Recommendations:

- 1 PROTECT NATURALLY TOLERANT ASH TREES IN EXISTING FORESTS**
Healthy mature ash trees showing natural tolerance to ash dieback should be retained to support natural regeneration and strengthen the spread of tolerance in future forest generations.
- 2 SUPPORT DEPLOYMENT OF IMPROVED SEED SOURCES**
Newly developed seed orchards should be expanded to provide planting material with increased tolerance, helping restore ash populations while enriching local genetic diversity through gene flow with surviving trees.
- 3 INVEST IN LONG-TERM BREEDING AND TESTING PROGRAMMES**
Continued selection and breeding based on the Breeding Seed Orchard (BSO) concept is essential to progressively increase tolerance and enable future large-scale restoration and productive use of ash.
- 4 MAINTAIN LONG-TERM RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION EFFORTS**
Governments and stakeholders should continue funding research and ex situ conservation programmes, as current evidence from over 30 years of Nordic research shows strong potential for securing the future of ash in resilient broadleaf forestry systems.

Skogforsk 2026 | © Forestry Research Institute of Sweden

See what ways the researchers find to save the ash



NTN Roadshow 4:

Field Day Highlights Precision Horticulture, Automation and CEA

Bulduri Biotechnology Center invites you to the Digi-Garden testbed in Jūrmala for the Baltic region's first Nordic Testbed Field Day. Connect with growers, startups, and advisors while discovering precision agriculture, CEA, and smart horticulture in action! Expect hands-on robotics and automation demos, startup pitches, and a co-creation lab. An optional second day features the local plant and crafts fair and time to explore Jūrmala!



Still time to register – DEADLINE SEPT 10

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Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research:

Assessing the effects of forest structure on vegetation optical depth in boreal forests

The study investigated how satellite-derived Vegetation Optical Depth (VOD) reflects forest structure in managed boreal forests of Finland and Sweden. By linking

microwave observations to measurements of forest height, volume, leaf area, and biomass, the researchers found that L-band VOD captures important aspects of forest structure, while X-band VOD is less informative in these landscapes. The findings improve our understanding of how satellite data represent boreal forests and provide valuable insights for developing more accurate maps of forest biomass and monitoring forest change from space.

[Read the full article here](#)

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