

Phytophthora at Moorine Rock

To Western Australians, the term 'dieback' is usually used to refer to the devastating disease caused by a soil-borne fungus, *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. This has been introduced to WA and has caused/is causing havoc in our plant communities, both native and cultivated. There are, however, other *Phytophthora* species - at least 24 in WA - most of which are probably native. One is *P. citricola*. Deaths caused by this fungus are usually isolated instances.

A worrying development is that Elaine Davison, a consultant mycologist, reports that *P. citricola* has recently been isolated from soil at Moorine Rock. This is way east of previously known populations and into the drier regions where *Phytophthoras* were not supposed to be able to survive. (But note, it is possible that the site received increased run-off, and therefore greater effective rainfall.) Nevertheless, this discovery raises the spectre of *Phytophthora* in the eastern wheatbelt, and reminds us that **Dieback hygiene should be undertaken wherever you are.**
