

PESTS AND DISEASES AFFECTING EUCALYPTS IN PORTUGAL: CURRENT SITUATION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

Several pests and pathogens cause damage to eucalypts (*Eucalyptus* spp.) in Portugal. Most of these organisms are insects and fungi native to Australia, the region of origin of eucalypts, with which these species coevolved. The number of pests and diseases affecting eucalypts has been increasing worldwide in the last five decades, due to the growing circulation of people and goods. Fourteen pests and several dozens of pathogens have already been found in Portugal, most of them in the last twenty years. Economic losses caused by biotic agents may be important, both in forest plantations and in nurseries. To reduce their impact, control methods have to be developed and employed. The main control methods are: i) classical biological control, in which specific natural enemies from Australia are imported and introduced into Portugal; ii) selecting and planting resistant or tolerant eucalypts; and iii) applying pesticides. This work aims to review the status of the pests and diseases affecting eucalypts in Portugal, their impacts, and the success of the management strategies that have been employed. Because new pests and diseases are expected to arrive in the coming years, future challenges are also discussed.

Keywords: invasive species, biological control, genetic improvement, integrated pest management, *Eucalyptus globulus*.