Dieback
WORKING GROUP INC

Frequently asked questions about dieback-free basic raw material

Basic raw materials (BRM) are materials such as gravel, sand, limestone and hard rock that are usually used in their unprocessed state. The use of BRM poses a significant risk of spreading Phytophthora Dieback (dieback) if it comes from an infested pit.

Dieback-free BRM is a valuable resource with very limited availability. Its most appropriate use is within or adjacent to areas of native vegetation that have high conservation significance, and warrant long-term protection from dieback.

Question: **What does 'dieback-free' BRM mean?**
Answer BRM that is not infested with *Phytophthora* (the plant pathogen that causes dieback).

Question: **Who decides if BRM is dieback-free or not?**
Answer When government agencies refer to dieback-free BRM they are generally referring to the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) standard which states that dieback-free BRM has been hygienically extracted from a site that was assessed by a registered Phytophthora Dieback Interpreter as uninfested i.e. dieback-free.

Question: **What is 'certified' dieback-free BRM?**
Answer: 'Certified' suggests that there is a system that enforces standards across the extractive industries around exploration, extraction and transport to ensure that BRM is dieback-free. Unfortunately, no such system has ever existed but the term and misconception has persisted for many years.

Question: **I am a customer - can't I just buy dieback-free BRM from a supplier?**
Answer: You may find a supplier who offers 'certified' dieback-free BRM or BRM that comes with a dieback-free 'certificate'. However, as there is no system for certifying BRM, there is no guarantee that the product you purchase will actually be dieback-free. DBCA does not accept 'certificates' as proof that BRM is dieback-free.

Question: **I am a quarry owner – can't I just get someone to assess my quarry for dieback?**
Answer: In most cases assessing the dieback status of an existing quarry is not possible because quarries are generally devoid of vegetation making them uninterpretable. In terms of sampling to determine the status of the status of the resource: *Phytophthora* is difficult to detect through random sampling and it cannot be concluded that an entire site or an entire BRM stockpile is uninfested from a single or a small number of negative samples.

Question: **Where can I source dieback-free BRM? Is there a listing of suppliers?**
Answer : Firstly, there is no list of suppliers of dieback-free BRM.
However, there is high confidence that BRM is dieback-free when:

1. It is sourced from a site that was originally assessed as dieback-free by a registered Phytophthora Dieback Interpreter (Interpreter)
2. When the site is maintained and monitored with a rigorous dieback management plan
3. When the BRM is extracted and transported hygienically to the site of use.

Question: **Does screened gravel still present a risk of spreading *Phytophthora*?**
Answer: Yes, it may still contain a small amount of organic matter where dieback spores persist.

Statement prepared by the BRM sub-committee of the DWG Inc.
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