

Anthracnose



Description

Several species of closely related fungi that produce browning and blackening of leaves, occasionally followed by defoliation and damage to buds and stems. Affected trees are often weakened and subject to secondary attack by wood boring insects or other pathogens.

Hosts

Species susceptible to Anthracnose infection

include Sycamore, London Plane, Oak, Walnut, Maple, Ash, Hickory, Elm, Birch, Catalpa, Basswood, Tulip tree, and Horsechestnut. It is particularly severe on Sycamore, Walnut, and the White Oak group.

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Symptoms

While specific symptoms vary between species, general evidence varies from tiny black or brown spots to large dead blotches on the leaves. Spots may merge until the entire leaf is affected. When trees are attacked early in the spring, new growth is killed and turns black, looking as if frost damaged. Defoliation occurs in spring or early summer.

Symptoms on most trees are confined to the leaves.

Symptoms Continued

However on more susceptible species such as sycamore, the twigs, buds, and shoots may be attacked and disfigured.

Life Cycle

The fungi that cause Anthracnose over-winter in infected leaves and twigs on the ground or on cankered twigs still in the tree. In the spring during rainy periods, large numbers of microscopic spores are released. These

spores are wind blown or splashed by rain onto the young growing shoots of a new host. When they lodge onto the leaves of a susceptible host during moist conditions, they germinate and the fungus enters the leaf.



Because the spores require moist conditions to germinate,

long cool rainy periods in the spring generally results in higher infection rates for the year, while in hot and dry springs the disease is limited or may even seem absent.

Control

Cleaning pruning and yard tools with disinfectant such as chlorine, peroxide, or rubbing alcohol will help limit the spread. Raking the leaves and pruning out affected branches reduces the number of spores that cause primary infection during the spring. This infected material should be disposed of by incineration or other appropriate means. Application of fertilizer will help increase the vigor of trees damaged by Anthracnose.

Anthracnose can be controlled on smaller trees by proper application of chemicals in the spring. Contact your local extension office for a list of registered chemical treatments. You may also contact Cincinnati Urban Forestry.

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