



Home Grounds Fact Sheet

Anthracnose



sycamore anthracnose

Throughout the northeastern states, many trees may be nearly defoliated by anthracnose from late May through June. Results of the disease are severe leaf blighting, eventual defoliation and formation of grotesque "birds nest" cluster of twigs.

Life cycle

The anthracnose fungus spends the winter in infected twigs and branches throughout the tree. In the spring, spores are produced and are washed by rain to the leaves and twigs below. For this reason, only the uppermost and outermost leaves escape the disease during years of severe infection.

Moisture is necessary for the development of the fungus; seashore areas with constant heavy mist or fog almost always have more disease than drier areas inland. Rain is not the primary factor in determining severity of anthracnose. Temperatures during early spring play a greater role in governing disease severity. If the mean daily temperatures (the average of maximum and minimum tem-

perature) are between 50° and 55° between bud break and early leaf emergence, anthracnose will be severe.

Maple, oak, sycamore, birch and ash are affected by a variety of anthracnose organisms. Although affected trees will lose their leaves in June, in about a month they will have a new crop of leaves. Even severely affected American sycamore trees will not die. Huge native specimens in parks, pastures and seashore areas where anthracnose is most severe have been defoliated annually for many years but somehow survive.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Considerations

IPM is a common sense approach to pest control and plant care. It employs a number of measures to prevent, control or reduce plant problems. These include using resistant plant varieties, proper plant selection and placement, good aftercare and biological and/or mechanical controls. As a last resort, after all other remedies have been explored, a pesticide* that is least toxic to people and natural predators, can be considered. Prior to using any pesticides, plants should always be monitored for the degree of infestation and a sensible control measure considered.

* A pesticide is a substance that kills, or attempts to kill, a particular pest, e.g. insecticide, fungicide, herbicide, etc.

Control

Fungicide sprays on young and recently transplanted sycamore or London plane in spring will help control the disease. The first application should be made just before the buds start to open and should be repeated twice at about ten-day intervals.

Heat stress from extended hot, dry periods in mid-summer may result in

yellowing and dropping of older leaves while terminal leaves on each branch will remain green. This should not be confused with a reaction to anthracnose.

Destroy or compost fallen infected leaves in autumn. Chemical pesticides may be available. If you choose to use a chemical pesticide, contact your local Cooperative Extension office for specific recommendations. If anthracnose has been severe the previous year and cool, wet conditions prevail in spring, spray at bud-break and twice thereafter at 7- to 14-day intervals, according to label directions. Spreader stickers added to sprays will help to ensure contact during inclement weather.

Do not use a hose-end sprayer!

Hose-end sprayers do not dissolve, mix or apply pesticides accurately or evenly. The changing rates of water pressure, different hose diameters and water temperature provide variables that prevent accurate mixing and delivery. A hand pump or powered tank sprayer, where the pesticide is premixed to the proper dilution, allows for the application of a known mixture as per label instructions.

"This publication contains pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly and human errors are still possible. Some materials mentioned may no longer be available, and some uses may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension specialist or your regional DEC office (631) 444-0341. Read the label before applying any pesticide. Cornell Cooperative Extension and its employees assume no liability for the effectiveness or results of any chemicals for pesticide usage. No endorsement of products is made or implied.