

Leaf Spots on Trees

Do not panic when you see spots on the leaves of trees. Healthy trees can withstand this type of damage. Even if the leaves begin to fall, do not get too concerned. A healthy tree can overcome this. Just rake up the fallen leaves and discard them. The leaf spots are often caused by fungi or bacteria. Disposing of the leaves can reduce the chance that the disease will return to the tree.

Could we treat the tree? You would have to spray every leaf every few weeks or so. Even if you spray now, you cannot cure the disease. A pesticide will just keep the disease from spreading to other leaves. Since healthy trees can ward off the disease, I suggest you do not try to control the disease by spraying.

You notice I keep mentioning healthy trees. How do we keep a tree healthy? Do not dig around trees or drive on their roots. Water them during times of drought - one inch every week or so. Replace the grass around trees with a three to five inch mulch. Plant recommended varieties in locations where they will thrive.

You may see brick-red spots on your dogwood leaves. This is spot anthracnose. Rake up fallen leaves. Since dogwood trees prefer shade, the disease may be worse on trees in the sun. Plant new dogwoods in shady areas with well drained but moist soils.

Are your oak leaves blistered? Do they have raised green, yellow or brown spots on their leaves? This is oak leaf blister. Rake the leaves up and discard them.

Flowering pears may have fire blight. The tips of the branches turn black as though they were burned by fire. The end of the branch bends over like a shepherd's crook. Some flowering pear trees are resistant to the disease and some are not. If your tree is resistant, the disease will probably stop. If not, then the disease may kill it.

Carefully cut out the dead branches if you can. Prune them out six to eight inches below the bottom of the brown part. The disease is easy to spread. Clean your shears between every cut by dipping them in isopropyl alcohol. Collect all clippings and throw them away. Always plant disease resistant varieties. Fire blight can also infect apple, pear, pyracantha and loquat.

If the tree has a constant leaf spot disease problem, then you need to think about replacing it. Call our office for a list of recommended trees.