

Phytophthora Bleeding Canker

TREE DOCTOR TIPS

Phytophthora Bleeding Canker (Various *Phytophthora* spp.)

DESCRIPTION:

Phytophthora bleeding canker is a disease caused by multiple species of *Phytophthora*, which invade the bark and outer sapwood of trees. The pathogen is known to attack shrubs and trees that are already under stress, and may be fatal to trees—if left untreated.

HOSTS:

European beech trees are the most common host of Phytophthora bleeding canker, however, the following trees have also been common hosts:

- Maple
- American beech
- Birch
- Magnolia
- Dogwood
- Oak
- Walnut

BIOLOGY AND SYMPTOMS:

The most obvious symptom is a dark sap oozing from bark cankers. Phytophthora bleeding canker kills the tree's surface tissues, turning the inner sapwood dark red to reddish-brown. The bleeding cankers may serve as an entry point for insects or other pathogens. Foliage may decrease or drop prematurely, and branch dieback will usually occur.

MANAGEMENT:

Early detection of this disease is vital for treatment. If detected in time, trees that are not severely diseased are often able to recover. There are also fungicide treatments that, if applied

properly, may help to protect the tree against bleeding canker. If damage is severe enough, removal may be necessary to prevent the disease from spreading to nearby healthy plants. If you suspect your trees may be suffering from Phytophthora bleeding canker, consult your local arborist to have them evaluated and determine what treatments are right for your property.



FIGURE A. CRACKING BARK WITH BLACK OOZE IS A SYMPTOM OF *Phytophthora ramorum*, ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS BLEEDING CANKERS (Photo credit: Bruce Moltzan, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org)

The scientists at **The Davey Institute** laboratory and research facility support our arborists and technicians in diagnosing and prescribing based on the latest arboricultural science. For specific treatment and application details, your arborist may consult *The Davey Institute's Plant Health Care Book*.

