

Needle Blights and Casts of Pines

A number of fungi attack the needles of pines resulting in leaf spots, blights and premature defoliation. The following are some common fungal diseases.

BROWN SPOT NEEDLE BLIGHT

SYMPTOMS: This fungus is common on longleaf pine in the southeastern United States and Scotch pine in the central plains and Great Lakes regions. Circular, straw-colored to light brown lesions form on needles in late summer or early fall. Spots may coalesce to kill most of the needle, resulting in premature defoliation the summer following infection.

MANAGEMENT: Apply a protective fungicide in early spring. Do not prune trees during wet weather.



Needle tip dieback caused by brown spot needle blight on slash pine.

CYCLANEUSMA NEEDLE CAST

SYMPTOMS: Numerous pine species are affected. Light green to yellow spots form on infected 2-year old or older needles. Brown bands later form. Off-white fruiting bodies form on needles and open during wet weather. Symptoms usually appear in late summer or fall. Premature defoliation occurs.

MANAGEMENT: Apply a protective fungicide 3 times in early spring through mid-summer. If the problem is severe, continue to apply fungicides until late fall.



Spots on needles caused by Dothistroma needle blight on Austrian pine.

DOTHISTROMA NEEDLE BLIGHT

SYMPTOMS: Austrian, lodgepole, Monterey and Ponderosa pines are the most susceptible species in the United States. Yellow to tan spots form in September to November. The bands then turn brown to reddish-brown and needle tips turn brown. Needle base remains green. The disease can result in severe stunting and death of young trees.

MANAGEMENT: Apply a protective fungicide in early summer: Repeat application in 2-3 weeks in late summer. Do not prune trees during wet weather.

LOPHODERMMIUM NEEDLE CAST

SYMPTOMS: Red and Scotch pines are very susceptible species. Brown spots with yellow margins form in late winter and early spring on last year's needles. By early summer needles turn brown. In late summer to early fall black, football shaped fruiting bodies form on needles. Premature defoliation of older needles occurs the summer after infection.

MANAGEMENT: Apply a preventative fungicide in late summer through fall. Reapplications need to be made if wet weather persists.