

Tinder Fungus

TREE DOCTOR TIPS

Tinder Fungus (*Fomes fomentarius*)

DESCRIPTION:

Tinder fungus is a fungal species that produces large, porous fruiting bodies that often resemble a horse's hoof. They vary in color, but are most commonly gray, black or brown. The body can be from 2-17 inches across, 1-10 inches wide and 1-10 inches tall. The mushroom is woody and hard, with a bumpy, rough upper surface and a cream-colored, porous underside.

HOSTS:

This fungus grows on various tree species, but most commonly on hardwoods. In the North, birch trees have been found to be more susceptible, while beech trees are commonly infected in the South.

BIOLOGY AND SYMPTOMS:

Tinder fungus gets its name for its use to start fires. It is an active ingredient in Amado, which is a material used as tinder. Tinder fungus is a parasitic species that enters a tree through cracked bark or broken branches, causing decay or rot. Infected wood will likely show black lines, which is a common sign of decay. Tinder fungus can remain on its host for years, eventually turning from a parasite to a decomposer once the tree has died. Infected trees may become brittle and susceptible to cracking and falling. In some cases, it may be infecting the tree without showing any symptoms. Spores are produced both in the spring and fall, and the amount produced depends on the surrounding environmental conditions. The spores may be visible as a white, powdery substance.

MANAGEMENT:

Because of its parasitic nature, tinder fungus can be a serious problem in landscape trees. There currently are no effective fungicide treatments to combat this fungus, so prevention is

crucial. If tinder fungus growths are found, your local arborist should evaluate the tree for soundness as soon as possible. A few ways to help keep your trees free of tinder fungus and other fungal diseases include:

- Avoid injury to plants from lawn mowers, string trimmers and other common lawn and garden tools.
- Fertilize landscape trees to promote proper nutrient balance in the soil.
- Prune branches that are broken or appear to be damaged or dying to eliminate entry points for fungal diseases.

For more tips on helping your landscape trees thrive, or to have your trees inspected for tinder fungus, consult your local arborist.



FIGURES A. & B. TINDER FUNGUS ON BIRCH

*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 PHC Handbook*.*

