



Arkansas Plant Health Clinic Newsletter

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Daffodil

Daffodils are considered harbingers of spring, being among the very first of the spring bulbs to bloom. Depending on what part of the country you hail from, these spring beauties are called Daffodils or Jonquils or Narcissus. Narcissus is the genus name for Daffodils, Jonquils, and Paperwhites. We use the common name daffodil when referring to the large, trumpet-shaped flowers of the *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*. Daffodils have flat leaves and usually one bloom per stem. Jonquils, *Narcissus jonquilla*, have dark green, tube-shaped leaves with several flowers per stem. *Narcissus tazetta papyraceous* are known as Paperwhites and are tender in colder parts of the country. Paperwhite bulbs are often forced for indoor displays during the holiday season. There are hundreds of cultivars in the Genus Narcissus. For the purposes of this discussion, we will refer to the entire group as Daffodils. Whether you call them Daffodils, or Jonquils, or Narcissus, they usually have few disease problems. The Plant Health Clinic does occasionally receive a sample of Daffodils with what is known as Bud Blast. Extreme environmental conditions such as a hard freeze or hot spell at a critical time may cause the buds

to dry out and turn brown before opening. Drought conditions during the growing period may contribute to the problem. Slow-release fertilizers rich in potassium applied in the fall helps with preventing Bud Blast. If this becomes a chronic problem in your garden, look for daffodils which are resistant to blast, such as: 'Tahiti', 'Unique', 'Sir Winston Churchill' and others.

Occasionally, we hear complaints of Daffodils failing to set buds altogether. This occurs when bulbs are set too shallowly. Shallow planting encourages the bulb to offset small bulblets that are too small to flower. Daffodils should be planted 6-9 inches deep and covered with several inches of mulch to protect against ground heaving during freezes. They may also fail to set buds if the foliage is cut off right after bloom the previous year. Spent foliage should be left after bloom for at least eight weeks.

Daffodil Bud Blast-Abiotic



Photo by Carla Vaught, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

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Daffodil Bud Blast-Abiotic



Photo by Carla Vaught, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Blueberry

Now is the time to start scouting for Mummy Berry, caused by *Monilinia vaccinii-corymbosi*. The first symptom is wilting of developing leaves and shoots in the spring, followed within 24 hours by browning of the upper side of bent shoots, midribs, and lateral veins of leaves. Infected shoots, leaves, and flowers are killed within 3 days after initial symptoms appear. Dead leaves and flowers eventually fall off the plant. Plants are then free of symptoms until berries start to ripen. Berries that are infected become cream to salmon pink, then tan or whitish gray. The mummified berries shrivel and harden, and then drop to the ground. These mummies are called pseudosclerotia. They germinate to form apothecia which resemble tiny mushrooms. The apothecia produce the ascospores that infect new tissue in the spring. Conidiophores and conidia are

produced on the tissue infected by ascospores and cause secondary infections of berries. Control of Mummy Berry needs to be a combination of good cultural practices and fungicide treatments. In the fall, before leaf drop, shallowly cultivate to bury mummies. In early spring around budbreak, destroy developing apothecia by raking or cultivating soil. Some growers pile soil from between the rows at the base of the bushes and between the bushes to bury the mummies. They rake soil back into the rows later in spring after apothecia are gone. Practice good weed control and plant tolerant cultivars. Lime sulfur applied during the dormant season helps control Mummy Berry. Captan, Ziram, Captevate, Abound, Cabrio, Pristine, Indar, and Switch are labeled for Mummy Berry control during the growing season. Applications should begin at green tip and pink bud stage. Read labels for complete directions.

Blueberry Mummy Berry-*Monilinia vaccinii-corymbosi*



Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension



Blueberry Mummy Berry-*Monilinia vaccinii-corymbosi*



Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Blueberry Mummy Berry-*Monilinia vaccinii-corymbosi*



Photo by University of Georgia Plant Pathology Archive, Bugwood.org

Dieffenbachia

Bacterial Leaf Spot and Stem Rot, caused by *Pectobacterium chrysanthemi*, infects many ornamental houseplants. A mushy, tan to brown lesion at the soil line is generally the first symptom of stem rot. Infections on some hosts produce slimy bacterial ooze. Lower leaves wilt or turn yellow, followed by the collapse of the entire plant. A nasty, fishy odor is distinctive enough to be diagnostic. Leaf lesions are pinpoint to begin with, water-soaked, and irregularly shaped. The spots are sometimes surrounded by a chlorotic halo. The lesions grow rapidly, encompassing an entire leaf in just a few days. Often, concentric rings of light and dark tissue may be observed in the lesion. The dead tissue at the center of the lesions commonly dries out and becomes tattered. There are no good chemical treatments for Bacterial Leaf Spot and Stem Rot. Homeowners should probably discard affected plants. Keeping foliage dry and avoiding wounding plants are the recommended cultural controls.



Dieffenbachia Bacterial Stem Rot-*Pectobacterium chrysanthemi*



Photo by University of Georgia Plant Pathology Archive,
Bugwood.org

Dieffenbachia Bacterial Leaf Spot-*Pectobacterium chrysanthemi*



Photo by University of Georgia Plant Pathology Archive,
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This bulletin from the Cooperative Extension Plant Health Clinic (Plant Disease Clinic) is an electronic update about diseases and other problems observed in our lab each month. Input from everybody interested in plants is welcome and appreciated.

"This work is supported by the Crop Protection and Pest Management Program [grant no. 2017-70006-27279/project accession no. 1013890] from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture."