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RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System
Sherrie Smith

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Arkansas Plant Health Clinic Newsletter

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Oak

Botryosphaeria Canker caused by the fungus *Botryosphaeria quercuum*, anamorph *Dothiorella quercina*, is a stress pathogen of oak. Environmental stresses such as drought, flooding, insect damage, storm, or pH and related nutritional issues may pre-dispose a tree to Botryosphaeria Canker. In oak, Botryosphaeria causes a twig and branch dieback without outright killing the tree. The newest growth on the ends of branches wilts, with twig dieback typically extending 4-6 inches down the affected twig. Leaves bend backward toward the tree, turn brown, and remain attached. In severe cases, small branches will also develop cankers. In cross section, a typical pie-shaped lesion may be observed. Branches and twigs with cankers should be pruned out and destroyed. There are no guaranteed effective chemical controls, although there has been some success with thiophanate-methyl.

Oak Botryosphaeria Canker- *Botryosphaeria quercuum*

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

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Oak Botryosphaeria Canker-
Botryosphaeria quercuum

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Turf

Chinch Bugs, *Blissus spp.*, feed and reproduce on a wide range of host plants, including corn, rice, small grains, bunch grasses, and turf grasses. In turf, Cinch Bugs prefer St. Augustine grass but also feed on Bermuda and Zoysia. Chinch Bugs feed by inserting their sucking mouthparts into the plant tissue and feeding on the sap. Symptoms usually become noticeable mid to late summer as turf becomes stressed by cinch bug feeding activity on top of high temperatures and drought. Yellow, wilted, stunted areas that become dead spots appear in turf grass. The spots enlarge as the population of Cinch Bugs increases. As the affected turf dies, Cinch Bugs migrate from infested patches to neighboring turf as the season progresses. Cultural control practices include water and fertility management, and thatch control. A heavy thatch layer provides a protected place for Chinch Bugs to feed and reproduce. Turf should be de-thatched via vertical cutting when thatch becomes greater than ½ inch thick. Insecticides should only be applied when populations are high and cultural controls have failed, as insecticides also kill cinch bug predators. Insecticides labeled for homeowner chinch bug control include Naturalis-T, Ortho, Sevin, Bayer Advanced Insect Control, Spectracide Insect Control, Bonide, DeltaGard, Scimitar, Talstar, Tempo, and Hi-Yield permethrin. There is a simple method of determining if your lawn has Chinch Bugs. Place a coffee can with both ends removed into the soil so it will hold water. Fill the can with water. Cinch Bugs will float to the top in a few minutes.

Chinch Bug nymph-*Blissus* spp.

Photo by Raven Bough, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

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Chinch Bug life stages-*Blissus* spp.

Photo by David Shetlar, The Ohio State University, Bugwood

Tomato

Several species of Stink Bugs feed on tomato fruit as well as on many other vegetables, fruits, nuts, and field crops. Stink Bug species in Arkansas include the Green stink bug, *Chinavia hilaris* (Say), the Southern Green stink bug, *Nezara viridula* (L.), the Brown stink bug, *Euschistus servus* (Say), and the Rice stink bug, *Oebalus pugnax* (F.). Adult Stink Bugs are shield-shaped insects with piercing sucking mouthparts. They get their common name "Stink Bug," from the strong odor they emit when disturbed. Stink Bugs pierce tomato fruit and inject enzymes from their salivary glands to liquefy and pre-digest the plant material. Damage on green tomato fruit appears as dark pinpricks surrounded by a light discolored area. On ripe fruit, the area around the feeding site usually turns yellow. If the skin of the fruit is peeled back, white spots may be observed on the flesh of the tomato. Females overwinter as adults and lay egg masses in the spring on host plants. There can be several generations a season. For Stink Bug control, homeowners may use Ortho Max Flower, Fruit, Citrus, and Vegetable Insect Control; or Bayer Advanced Insect Control; or Spectracide Insect Control; or permethrins; or Pyrellin EC.

Tomato Stink Bug damage-*Pentatomidae* spp.

Photos by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

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Okra Stink Bug damage-
Pentatomidae

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Pecan Stink Bug damage-
Pentatomidae

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Corn Stink Bug damage-
Pentatomidae

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Corn Stink Bug damage-
Pentatomidae

Photo by Wes Kirkpatrick University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

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.

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