



## Arkansas Plant Health Clinic Newsletter

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### Dracaena

Dracaenas are popular, easy-care houseplants. However, they are very sensitive to fluoride toxicity. Most of the time, the fluoride source is from fluoridated tap water. However, superphosphate, perlite, and some peats are also sources of fluoride. Fluoride accumulates in the tips of plants and prevents the stomates from closing properly. Necrotic lesions, tip burn, and marginal chlorosis, followed by browning of the leaves are common symptoms. Fluoride toxicity is seldom fatal. Sensitive plants should be watered from a non-fluoridated water supply. Perlite should be rinsed with 2-3 times its volume in water before using in a potting mix. Soil pH should be maintained between 6.0-6.5. Use triple superphosphate or soluble phosphates instead of superphosphate. Some sensitive plants are listed below:

*Aglaonema commutatum* 'Maria'  
*Asparagus*, ornamental (*A. densiflorus* and other *Asparagus* Fern species)  
*Aspidistra* (Cast Iron Plant)  
*Goeppertia makoyana* (Peacock Plant)  
*Caryota* (Fishtail Palm)  
*Chamaedorea elegans* (Parlor Palm)  
*Chlorophytum comosum* (Spider Plant)

*Chrysalidocarpus lutescens* (Areca Palm)  
*Cordyline fruticosa* (Ti Plant)  
*Ctenanthe*  
*Dracaena deremensis* 'Warneckii' and 'Janet Craig'  
*Dracaena fragrans* (Corn Plant)  
*Dracaena marginata* (Dragon Tree)  
*Dracaena sanderiana* (Lucky Bamboo)  
*Dracaena thalioides* (Lance Dracaena)  
*Dypsis lutescens* (Areca Palm)  
*Howea* (Kentia Palm)  
*Maranta* (Prayer Plant)  
*Rhapis* (Slender Lady Palm)  
*Spathiphyllum* (Peace Lily)  
*Stromanthe amabilis* (Dragon Tracks)  
*Tradescantia zebrina* (Wandering Jew)  
*Yucca gigantea* (Spineless Yucca)

### Dracaena Fluoride Toxicity- Abiotic



Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas  
Cooperative Extension

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## Dracaena Fluoride Toxicity-Abiotic



Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

## Parlor Palm Fluoride Toxicity-Abiotic



Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

## Watermelon

Although *Pythium* spp. often attack watermelon seedlings, older, more mature plants can also be attacked. Feeder roots discolor and become tan to brown and water soaked. Roots become soft and rotted and can slough away. Lower stem tissue closest to the ground becomes gray green, then brown to red brown and soft-rotted. Fruit that is in contact with the



soil develop irregularly shaped, water-soaked, brown lesions. Plants become stunted and chlorotic, wilt, and die. Resistant cultivars, excellent drainage, and crop rotation are critical to achieving control. Ridomil Gold SL and Uniform are both labeled for control of *Pythium* in watermelon. Homeowners must rely on cultural practices.

### **Watermelon Pythium Root and Crown Rot-*Pythium* spp.**



Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

### **Watermelon Pythium Fruit Rot-*Pythium* spp.**



Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

### **Oak**

Oak Anthracnose is caused by the fungus *Apiognomonia errabunda* (syn. *A. quercina*). All species of oak are susceptible, with white oak being very susceptible. Symptoms are necrotic, irregularly shaped lesions along the veins and margins of the leaves, puckering, curling, and leaf distortion. Spores from twigs that were infected the previous season are splashed onto newly emerging leaves in the spring. Older leaves are more resistant but may develop small brown lesions in the summer during prolonged wet weather. Severe infections may cause twig death and defoliation. If the tree is in otherwise good health, it will usually put on new leaves to replace those lost. Rarely does Oak Anthracnose cause permanent damage to healthy trees. However, repeated defoliation weakens the tree and makes it more



susceptible to other diseases and to insects. Control consists mainly of good sanitation. Leaves should be raked and removed from the planting in the fall. Trees that have been defoliated for consecutive seasons may benefit from fungicide applications. Applications should begin at bud break in the spring. Fungicides labeled for oaks include Cleary's 3336 (thiophanate-methyl), Mancozeb, copper fungicides, and products containing chlorothalonil.

### **Oak Anthracnose-*Apiognomonia errabunda* (syn. *A. quercina*)**



Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

### **Oak Anthracnose-*Apiognomonia errabunda* (syn. *A. quercina*)**



Photo by Sherrie Smith, 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.

"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."