

URBAN FARMER

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Disease Control: Anthracnose

Anthracnose is a common disease affecting a wide variety of plants. It is most commonly found on shade trees such as sycamore, ash, oak and maple, and it thrives in warm, humid areas.

What is it?

Anthracnose is a type of fungal disease that can affect a variety of different plants, vegetables and trees. It is identified by dark, sunken lesions on the plant's leaves, but it also can affect stems, flowers and fruits from the plant. During a wet season with lots of rain, this disease can spread very quickly. Typically, it can be spread by watering and it thrives in warm, wet conditions. Most commonly, it affects trees.

In its beginning stages, anthracnose appears as small, irregular brown or yellow spots on the leaves of a plant. As they continue to grow, the spots will darken and spread to cover the entire leaf. If the disease is found on fruits, in some occasions a pink-like spore will mass in the center of the fruit, causing the fruit to rot. For trees, the disease attacks twigs and leaves and can cause defoliation.

How to cure it:

If you notice Anthracnose attacking vegetation in your garden, remove and destroy any infected plants as the disease spreads very easily. If the disease is found on a tree, prune back any infected portions. Since anthracnose is a fungus, it is spread by spores, which can be easily carried by wind, watering or other methods. Removing the infected vegetation as soon as it is discovered is the easiest way to prevent



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future spreading of the disease. You can also use a copper-based fungicide and spray it on the infected areas of plants, but take care when doing this because copper can build up in toxic levels and harm the earthworms in the soil. For trees, you can try to spray bordeaux mix on the infected areas.

If you find anthracnose on your vegetables, such as on a tomato, completely remove the diseased area prior to using the fruits in the kitchen. Do not compost the diseased area, as this may spread the fungus into your compost and throughout your garden.

How to prevent it:

The easiest way to prevent anthracnose is by planting plants resistant to the disease. You can also plant seeds that are certified to be disease free. Also, when planting, space your plants adequately so they aren't crowding each other. Continuously prune your plants to create a good airflow between them. Also, utilize crop rotation



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to prevent fungal build up in the soil. Once your fruits begin to ripen, don't let them touch the soil, as this can allow for fungus in the soil to spread to the fruit. Water your plants with an irrigation system or a drip sprinkler as opposed to overhead watering.

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