FACT SHEET
Prepared By The Davey Technical And Human Resources Center
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HYPOXYLON CANKER ASSOCIATED WITH DYING OAKS

Recent observations show that a large number of dying oaks are infected with Hypoxylon canker. This fungus is noted for attacking trees which are already in a stressed or declining condition.

STRESS FACTORS

What are some of the factors that weaken trees? These can be broken down to environmental or biological problems. It is primarily those related to our environment which play a major role in stressing our trees. Drought periods are stressful, but too much water is as detrimental to the trees as not enough moisture. Too frequently we experience extremes; it is either too wet or too dry, too cold or too hot.

Hypoxylon-infected trees have been found where stress has resulted from construction damage, excessive fill, lawn mower damage, or from storm damage.

Biological stresses relate to insect feeding and wounding or to invasion by other disease organisms such as oak wilt, any of which may precede attack by the Hypoxylon fungus.

Remember that Hypoxylon cankers are generally secondary to some other disease or stress condition.

SYMPTOMS — WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Hypoxylon can be identified by the dark-colored, crusty fungus tissue on the dead cankered area. Large pieces of bark may slough off, exposing the fungus beneath. Spore masses may vary in color from tan to bluish-gray to black. It is these spores, transported by wind, which cause new infections on wounded or stressed trees.

Willow and water oak appear to be most susceptible, followed by red oak and occasionally post and live oak.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Keep the tree as vigorous as possible by properly fertilizing.
2. Prune out any branches showing early infection as these can be a safety hazard, especially around the home. This also reduces the amount of spore inoculum in the area.
3. Contact a qualified arborist for his advice prior to any anticipated grade changes around your trees.
4. A specialized spray program can reduce stresses brought on by insect populations.

THE BEST FORM OF PREVENTION IS THROUGH THE PROPER CARE OF YOUR TREES.