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Rhododendron: Phytophthora blight

Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for successful plant problem management.

Biology

Phytophthora blight is a fungal disease whose symptoms are often confused with chemical or mechanical injury or leaf scorch. Irregular dead spots on the tips or margins of leaves, shiny black cankers on shoots, and leaf loss and tip dieback on affected branches are among the common symptoms. Several species of *Phytophthora* fungi can cause these symptoms. This disease is spread by wind and splashing water, but does not typically spread to neighboring, unrelated plant species. Do not confuse Phytophthora blight with Ramorum leaf and shoot blight, also caused by a *Phytophthora* species. See <http://pep.wsu.edu/hortsense/scripts/query/displayProblem.asp?tableName=plant&problemID=820&categoryID=1> Rhododendron: Ramorum leaf and shoot blight for additional information.

Management Options

Non-Chemical Management

- ~ Avoid wounding plants, as wounds provide ideal infection sites.
- ~ Remove infected leaves. Prune infected branches back into healthy wood. Destroy, do not compost, diseased plant material.
- ~ Rake and destroy fallen leaves to prevent the spread of infection.
- ~ Avoid overhead watering.

Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!

Chemical Management

IMPORTANT: Visit Home and Garden Fact Sheets for more information on using pesticides

Phytophthora blight is generally not a problem in the landscape. If it should develop as a problem, use sanitation and other cultural methods to manage the problem.

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Images



~ Caption: *Rhododendron Phytophthora blight*
~ Photo by: J.W. Pscheidt