TORONTO
Parks, Forestry & Recreation
Urban Forestry Branch
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Forest Health Care

Sycamore Anthracnose

Sycamore Anthracnose is the most serious disease of sycamore trees. It is caused by the fungus *Apiognomonia veneta*. It over-winters on fallen leaves and in cankers on twigs and branches. This fungus attacks newly emerging leaves in the spring and may cause bud, leaf, shoot and twig blight. The development of the disease is favoured by cool, wet weather in early spring. The disease weakens, but does not kill the tree. Trees usually refoliate by the end of the summer.

Host and Damage

Host trees are American sycamore, London plane tree and Oriental plane tree.

There are three stages in the development of the disease on sycamore trees, resulting in:

Shoot blight
Sudden browning and death of young shoots and newly unfolded leaves in early spring.

Leaf blight
Brown spots, usually along the veins of developed leaves. These leaves escaped early infection and shoot blight.

Twig blight
Cankers that girdle and kill young twigs. Small black dots (fruiting bodies of the fungus) are seen in the bark of dead twigs.

Specific Management Practices for Control of the Sycamore Anthracnose:

- Remove and destroy all fallen leaves and twigs in the fall. They are a source of infection in the following spring. Leaves may be composted by city composting programs.

- Diseased branches and twigs should be pruned out and destroyed. Spores of the fungus produced on them will otherwise cause new infection. Sterilize pruning tools in rubbing alcohol after pruning infected twigs and branches.

General Management Practices to Improve Tree Health:

- Water your trees during dry spells. Infrequent, but deep soaking preferably during the early morning hours is recommended. Water absorbing roots are located in the upper 25 cm of the soil and extend outward well beyond the canopy dripline.

- Place organic mulch, (e.g. wood chips), or living mulch, (e.g. ground cover plants) around tree bases to keep the soil moist for longer periods and encourage healthier roots.

- Avoid unnecessary excavating, grade changes, soil compaction, root cutting or hard surfacing around trees. These activities destroy vital roots, which may lead to the decline or death of trees.

- Refrain from using salt or herbicides around trees.

Forest Health Care is a holistic approach to tree care that focuses on improving the health of trees in an urban environment. Our objective is a healthy, sustainable urban forest. Trees in urban forests are often stressed by compacted soil, drought, poor planting and pruning techniques, air pollution, road salt, damage from construction and much more. Trees planted in the right sites and properly maintained are less likely to suffer and are more resistant to pest problems.

Pest problems are managed using a decision making process that considers the following:

- Identification of the host and the pest.
- Monitoring of the host and the pest.
- Selection of the appropriate management strategy.
- Evaluation of the management plan.

Our focus is on pest management programs that are environmentally, socially and economically sound.