

Problem: Cercospora Needle Blight of Juniper - *Cercospora sequoiae* var. *juniperi*



Host Plant: Rocky Mountain juniper

Description: Cercospora needle blight, caused by the fungus *Cercospora sequoiae* var. *juniperi*, is potentially destructive in established juniper plantings. Repeated infections over several years may result in defoliation and tree death. The disease is most severe in areas with high summer humidity and frequent rains.

Symptoms of Cercospora needle blight first appear in late summer and fall on inner branch needles (those located nearest the main tree trunk) and toward the lower portion of the tree. Needles turn dull brown or red and eventually drop. Small fuzzy or hairy spore-bearing fungal structures, easily visible with a hand lens, form on the dead needles. Defoliation in succeeding years continues from the inner portion of the branch toward the tip, and from the bottom of the tree toward the top. Severely infected trees are open, spindly, and may appear as if they had been scorched by a fire.

Recommendations: Cercospora needle blight may occur on several juniper species. Rocky Mountain juniper is particularly susceptible and should not be planted in locations where the disease has previously been a problem. Most selections of eastern redcedar and Chinese junipers have good resistance to this disease. Proper tree spacing, which promotes good air movement and rapid drying of foliage, will also inhibit disease development.

References: [Tree & Shrub Problems in Kansas](#). K-State Research and Extension, Publication MF3132, pg 41

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