



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Provided to you by:

Conifer Disease Quick Reference

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UW Plant Disease Facts



Root and Crown Rots

Hosts: All conifers

Pathogens: Assorted root rot fungi/water molds

Signs/Symptoms: Poor growth, branch dieback, discolored and deteriorated roots

For more information see: UW Plant Disease Facts [D0094](#)



Rhizosphaera Needle Cast

Hosts: Colorado blue spruce, other spruces

Pathogen: *Rhizosphaera kalkhoffii*

Signs/Symptoms: Browning/purpling of interior needles of lower branches, followed by needle drop

For more information see: UW Plant Disease Facts [D0093](#)



Cytospora Canker

Hosts: Colorado blue spruce, other spruces

Pathogen: *Cytospora kunzei*

Signs/Symptoms: Branch dieback with milky-white patches of dried sap on affected branches

For more information see: UW Plant Disease Facts [D0037](#)



Spruce Needle Drop

Hosts: Spruces

Pathogen: Unknown (possibly *Setomelannoma holmii*)

Signs/Symptoms: Needle loss and dieback at or near branch tips



Gymnosporangium Rusts

Hosts: Juniper, apple, crabapple, hawthorn, quince

Pathogen: *Gymnosporangium* spp.

Signs/Symptoms: Brown blobs with orange gelatinous masses (juniper); yellow/orange leaf spots (other hosts)

For more information see: UW Plant Disease Facts [D0058](#)



Phomopsis Tip Blight

Hosts: Junipers

Pathogen: *Phomopsis juniperovora*

Signs/Symptoms: Browning and dieback of branch tips in spring and early summer as new growth emerges

For more information see: UW Plant Disease Facts [D0077](#)



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Diplodia Shoot Blight and Canker

Hosts: Austrian pine, other pines

Pathogen: *Diplodia* spp.

Signs/Symptoms: Dieback of branch tips with dead needles showing uneven lengths

For more information see: UW Plant Disease Facts [D0042](#)



Dothistroma Needle Blight

Hosts: Austrian pine, other pines

Pathogen: *Dothistroma pini*

Signs/Symptoms: Needle tip browning and death with a distinct break between live and dead tissue

For more information see: UW Plant Disease Facts [D0043](#)



Drought Stress

Hosts: All conifers

Cause: Insufficient water

Signs/Symptoms: Purpling/browning of needles near branch tips or higher up in plants during the summer



Winter Injury/Winter Burn

Hosts: All conifers, particularly yew and juniper

Cause: Insufficient water

Signs/Symptoms: Needle browning/bleaching over winter or in spring as plants come out of dormancy

For more information see: UW Plant Disease Facts [D0127](#)



Herbicide Damage

Hosts: All conifers

Cause: Exposure to herbicides

Signs/Symptoms: Twisted or otherwise distorted growth, needle yellowing or browning, plant death

For more information see: UW Plant Disease Facts [D0060](#)

For more information on conifer diseases: See <https://pddc.wisc.edu/> or contact the University of Wisconsin Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic (PDDC) at (608) 262-2863 or pddc@wisc.edu.