



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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Guignardia Leaf Spot

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What is Guignardia leaf spot? Guignardia leaf spot is a common fungal leaf disease that affects vining plants such as Boston ivy and Virginia-creeper. The fungus that causes Guignardia leaf spot also causes a leaf spot and fruit rot of grape called black rot.

What does Guignardia leaf spot look like? Symptoms of Guignardia leaf spot include roughly circular, or sometimes angular (i.e., straight-edged), ¼ to ½ inch diameter dead spots on affected leaves. Spots often have a purple-red border, and the centers may eventually fall out. Young leaves are more susceptible to infection than mature leaves. If infections occur before leaves have fully expanded, leaves can become puckered and distorted. Within the spots, a diffuse ring of black dots (reproductive structures of the fungus) is typically visible.



Roughly circular, red-bordered spots on Boston ivy typical of Guignardia leaf spot.

Where does Guignardia leaf spot come from? Guignardia leaf spot is caused by the fungus *Phyllosticta ampelicida* (formerly *Guignardia bidwellii*), which survives in leaf litter. Spores of the fungus are produced under cool, moist conditions and can be dispersed by wind or splashing water.

How do I save a plant with Guignardia leaf spot? DO NOT panic! Guignardia leaf spot is most often a cosmetic disease, making an affected plant look a little ragged, but not killing the plant. Only occasionally will the disease be more severe, resulting in defoliation.

How do I avoid problems with Guignardia leaf spot in the future? Remove and burn (where allowed by local ordinance), bury or hot compost fallen, infected leaves. Thin plants to increase airflow and promote rapid drying of foliage. This drier

environment is less favorable for disease developments. Water plants at the base using a soaker or drip hose to minimize wetting of leaves and reduce the movement of spores. If a plant has been severely defoliated by Guignardia leaf spot for several years, preventative fungicide treatments may be necessary. Make an initial fungicide application as leaves first begin to emerge. If the weather is cool and wet, make additional applications at seven to 14 day intervals until hotter, drier weather develops or until leaves are fully expanded and mature. Chlorothalonil, copper, mancozeb and thiophanate-methyl are labeled for Guignardia leaf spot control. DO NOT use the same active ingredient for all treatments (particularly if you are using thiophanate-methyl). Instead, alternate the use of at least two active ingredients. This strategy will help minimize problems with fungicide-resistant strains of *Phyllosticta ampelicida*. Be sure to read and follow all label instructions of the fungicide(s) that you select to ensure that you use the product(s) in the safest and most effective manner possible.

For more information on Guignardia leaf spot: Contact the University of Wisconsin Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic (PDDC) at (608) 262-2863 or pddc@wisc.edu.

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A complete inventory of UW Plant Disease Facts is available at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic website: <https://pddc.wisc.edu>.

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