

# Top 10 Tree Insects & Diseases

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*Condensed from PlantWNY presentation by Dr. Beth Brantley, Bartlett Tree Research Lab*

Pests and diseases were divided into 3 groups: those affecting roots, trunk/stems, and crown (leaves, twigs and branches).

## Roots:

**Armillaria root rot** (shoestring root rot), the honey mushroom. Can affect many species and is the largest living organism on the planet. Speeds up death of distressed trees. Keep trees as healthy as possible.

**Phytophthora root rot**, a soil-borne fungus. Causes damping off and stem rot. Buy resistant tree varieties, plant in appropriate sites.

## Trunks & Stem:

**Emerald Ash Borer:** Larvae kills trees by feeding under the bark. Monitor.

**Oak Wilt**, a fungus, affects mostly Red Oak group. Look for leaf drop and browning from the margins. Confirmed in 4 locations in NYS. Do not prune from April through July. Check your oaks and report any cases to DEC.

**Biscogniauxia (hypoxylon) canker** is a fungus that attacks stressed trees. Appears as brown/grey/blackish cankers on trees.

**Two-lined Chestnut borer** is a beetle that attacks weak oak trees. It causes bubbling under the bark.

**Pitch mass borer** is a moth causes lumber defects in spruce and pine. Blobs of pitch will be visible.

**Spotted lanternfly** new invasive. Larvae produce honeydew which encourages sooty mold.

**Diplodia tip blight**, a fungus disease of conifers rarely attacks young trees. Austrian pines are most affected.

## Crown:

**Gypsy moth:** has a 10-11 month cycle. Scrape off egg masses. Rhizosphaera needle cast. Needles brown and fall off. Colorado blue spruce most affected.

**Rhabdochline fungus on Douglas-fir:** Looks like camouflage spots on needles, causes needle cast off.

**Hemlock woolly adelgid**, an hemipteran insect, kills trees, check for “wooly” masses where needles meet branches in winter, Chemical control available.

**Elongate Hemlock scale**, an armored scale becoming a problem, scales on bottom of needle, tree looks chlorotic.

**Japanese maple scale**, looks like snow on the branches, effects more than 45 species. Use horticultural oil.

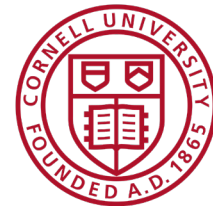
**Tar spot** affects sycamores and maples. Not found in area with high air pollution!

**Powdery mildew** is species specific.

**Norway spruce shoot gall midge:** unusual. no needles on tips, no cure, plant alternative species.

**Beech leaf disease**, caused by a nematode, a new disease that has been identified in Erie County. Leaves show striping of coloration. If spotted report to DEC.

Dr. Brantley recommended planting “ancient” species from our area, providing the appropriate conditions, and keeping the trees as healthy as possible. Diversify your plantings and consider the impact of our changing weather.



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