

Entomosporium Leaf Spot

By Deborah Birge, Fort Bend County Master Gardener

Q: What is Entomosporium Leaf Spot and what do you do about it?

Entomosporium leaf spot is a fungal disease particularly evident on Indian Hawthorne and Red-tip Photinia. The fungus survives in infected leaves on the plant or on the soil beneath the plant, and spores are dispersed by splashing water from rainfall or irrigation. This is why members of the rose family should never receive overhead irrigation. As a matter of fact, thanks to their drought tolerance and more than enough rainfall here, Indian hawthorns almost never need any irrigation in our area. Water on the leaves is required for infection to occur. Young, growing leaves are most susceptible to infection, and the disease develops rapidly during the cool, wet weather of spring and fall.



Entomosporium — Photo credit: Deborah Birge

Control Tips

1. Purchase only healthy plants that do not show leaf spot symptoms.
2. Space plants adequately to allow good air movement. This helps to promote rapid drying of leaves and reduces the chances of infection.
3. Remove fallen diseased leaves, particularly in the winter prior to the plant's new growth in the spring. This reduces a source of fungal spores available for new infections.
4. Water only when necessary. This prevents excessive new tender growth. When it is necessary to water plants, do it early in the morning to allow the leaves to dry faster with the morning sun. This minimizes the time that the foliage stays wet. Surface or drip irrigation is the preferred method of watering since the leaves remain dry. Alternatively, adjust sprinklers to reduce or prevent splashing and wetting the foliage.
5. Prune plants selectively and infrequently to help prevent excessive new growth.
6. Avoid fertilizing the plant during the summer to limit excessive plant growth. New, succulent growth increases the susceptibility of the plant to infections.
7. Fungicides, such as thiophanate-methyl and myclobutanil, can be used effectively to prevent Entomosporium leaf spots when conditions become favorable for developing the disease, such as in cool, wet weather with diseased plants growing nearby.

Always refer to product labels for instructions on proper usage of the fungicides. Fungicide applications are not necessary during hot, dry periods.

If you have further questions, please contact the Fort Bend Master Gardener Hotline and Research Team at FortBendmg@ag.tamu.edu

Resource: <https://agriflifeextension.tamu.edu/library/landscaping/entomosporium-leafspot-of-photinia-and-indian-hawthorn/>