

Anthracnose

Anthracnose is a collective term for fungal leaf and stem diseases that commonly afflict shade trees. While various trees can be affected, it's essential to note that maple anthracnose and oak anthracnose, though sharing similar symptoms, are distinct diseases caused by different fungi. The condition primarily targets leaf veins, causing the death of veins and surrounding tissue. Anthracnose doesn't typically lead to the death of the host tree but can result in reduced growth over successive seasons, especially after complete defoliation.

Signs & Symptoms

- Irregular, light brown spots on leaves along veins.
- Trees may exhibit a sun-scorched appearance.
- Sunken cankers with fungal spores on infected twigs, particularly in trees like sycamore.

Life Cycle

- Fungi overwinter on fallen leaves and twigs from the previous year.
- Infections thrive in cool, moist spring conditions.
- Vulnerable young leaves are susceptible when water films the leaf surface.

Management

- Remove all fallen infected leaves to prevent spread.
- Prune dead branches.
- Thin to promote air circulation.
- Spray with a fungicide when leaves are beginning to enlarge from the buds. Reapply at 7 – 10 day intervals, two or three more times in the season.



Photos Missouri Botanical Garden