

Date: June 16, 2005
Release: Home Gardening
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It's Back: Redtip Leafspot

The leafspot that has killed most of the Redtips in the southeast is now devastating Indian Hawthorne. Twenty years ago Redtips were the #1 shrub and we thought Redtips were maintenance free, then came the leafspot. Now Indian Hawthorne are the #1 shrub and here comes the leafspot. I no longer recommend planting Indian Hawthorne; however with a little effort you can control the disease. This disease also attacks Cleyera, but not as severely.

First of all, the disease is worse on pink flowering varieties of Indian Hawthorne; however, some white flowering varieties can also be severely affected. Symptoms are a leafspot with a red to purple halo. Severely infected plants are defoliated.

Next, the disease is encouraged by warm moist conditions, so the more you wet the foliage of your plants the worse the disease. Therefore, if you wet the leaves when you irrigate, then irrigate less frequently but more each time. This will wet the soil deeper and the foliage less.

Next prune Indian Hawthorne as little as possible. Young tender leaves are more prone to get leafspot. The more you prune off the old leaves the more new, young, tender leaves will be on the plant.

Next, use sanitation which is removing and discarding all diseased leaves, fallen leaves, and mulch from around the plants. This will help limit spread of the disease. Then, add new mulch to the plants and repeat this process every spring.

Finally, spray with a fungicide like Daconil, Dithane, Mancozeb, 3336, or Banner, especially when it is hot and rainy or humid. These will protect the foliage from the spread of the disease; however, they will not cure already infected leaves.

To learn the specifics on gardening we have both free and for-sale publications at our office in the back of the Public Services Building on the corner of Third Loop and Irby. You may also visit our Home & Garden Information Center through our web site at www.clemson.edu/florence. I may be contacted through our web site, amelton@clermson.edu, or 661-4800.

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