

Ask An Arborist™

Quick Reference: Anthracnose

April Showers Bring: Anthracnose

With a name like “anthracnose,” you might assume this fungal disease is pretty dangerous. In reality, it’s similar to the common cold in trees such as white oak, ash, elm, maple and walnut, catalpa, dogwood, hickory, hornbeam, linden and poplar. Sycamores are particularly susceptible. Fortunately, a unique fungus causes anthracnose in each species – so if your sycamore has it, your maple will not automatically be infected, too.

Although symptoms vary, most infected trees exhibit tan, dark brown, or black spots on the foliage that range from small and circular to large and irregular. Distorted foliage is also common. A heavy infection may completely defoliate a tree, causing it to produce new sets of leaves. If you have a sycamore, you already know this tree’s symptoms are more severe: tip and branch die-back often result from infection of the tree’s buds, shoots, and one-year-old twigs. Although few trees die due to anthracnose, continued infection leaves a tree susceptible to other diseases, frost injury, and insect infestations.



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