

Boxwood blight, *Cylindrocladium pseudonaviculatum*:

The first detection of boxwood blight in Pennsylvania was at a single nursery location in Lancaster County in January, 2012. Efforts to educate regulatory staff, extension staff, landscape professionals and growers on this new disease threat has resulted in a small number of positive finds in 2013. Trace forward investigations from known positive sites from other states have also yielded positive finds. A total of 12 positive samples were identified this year. Three of these positives were in garden center/nursery situations in Indiana, Delaware, and Chester County. Four residential sites were identified in Cumberland and Indiana Counties. All positive material was destroyed, and eradication protocols deployed. Three counties (Lancaster, Chester and Indiana) had sites that, because of the complexity of the situation, continue to be monitored and require action related to boxwood blight eradication.

Concerns were voiced on the possibility of movement of contaminated material from compost sites from landscapers, commercial composters, and nurseries into the environment. PDA has been working with the Plant Health Resource Center and industry leaders such as PLNA, to find funding for research of boxwood blight in compost. The study will look at the effects of temperature and compost methods on the longevity of the disease. Hopefully, the research will result in protocols to safely manage material. Currently, no infected boxwood should be included in compost piles. The safest method of disposal is burning. Burial is an option, but may not be practical or permitted, depending on the location of the infection.

PDA considers this to be a regulated pest and requires eradication of infected material. The nature of the disease allows for spores to be viable for 7-10 years in dead foliage. The spores are sticky and may be picked up and distributed by equipment, clothing, animals, etc. Currently there are no cures for the disease, but there are treatments which may prevent and/or mask the symptoms. Sanitation and bio security controls are essential in preventing the artificial spread of the disease. Currently it has limited distribution in the Commonwealth.

PDA recommends any shipments received should be held for 30 days with no fungicide sprays. This should allow any infected material to present. Diagnosis can only be confirmed by lab testing, as some of the symptoms are similar to other known diseases to boxwood. Anyone with suspect material should contact PDA.

Currently there is a voluntary clean program for nursery and boxwood producers to join if they would like. It is the "Boxwood Clean Program". This program certifies the participating company as implementing BMP's which will help minimize the movement of boxwood blight in their facility. Interested parties should contact Dana Rhodes, 717-772-5205, or danrhodes@pa.gov for more information. This program was developed by AmericanHort and National Plant Board.