



Cherry Leaf Spot

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IMPORTANCE

Cherry leaf spot occurs on both sweet and sour cherry; however, it is considerably more serious on sour cherries. Ornamental flowering cherry trees can also be susceptible to this disease. Premature defoliation from cherry leaf spot reduces flower bud set for the next year, weakens trees, and increases sensitivity to winter injury.

SYMPTOMS & SIGNS

Small (1/8 to 1/4 inch) purple spots appear on leaves approximately 10 to 14 days after infection. Following heavy dew or rain, fungal fruiting bodies (acervuli) exude white spore masses on under surfaces of leaves. Spots eventually turn brown and drop out, leaving holes in foliage. Affected leaves turn yellow and drop from trees prematurely. In severe cases, trees may become nearly defoliated by mid-season.



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CAUSE & DISEASE DEVELOPMENT

Cherry leaf spot is caused by the fungus *Blumeriella jaapii* (formerly, *Coccomyces hiemalis*), which overwinters in fallen leaves. In spring, spores (ascospores) are released and carried by wind or splashing rain to new infection sites. Secondary infections can occur throughout the growing season when additional spores (conidia) are released and spread during rainy weather.

DISEASE MANAGEMENT

- Apply fungicide sprays in spring, just after bloom. Continue regular sprays until 1 or 2 weeks after harvest. For current fungicide recommendations, refer to the fruit spray guides in Additional Resources or contact a local county Extension office.
- In small plantings, reduce overwintering fungal inoculum by raking and discarding/destroying fallen leaves in autumn.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Midwest Fruit Pest Management Guide for Commercial Growers (ID-232)
https://ag.purdue.edu/departement/hla/extension/_docs/id-465.pdf
- Disease and Insect Control Program for Homegrown Fruit in Kentucky, including Organic Alternatives (ID-21)
<http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/id/id21/id21.pdf>

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