

PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF NEEDLECAST

WHAT IS NEEDLECAST?

Needlecast is a serious FUNGUS DISEASE which attacks members of the conifer family, particularly pine, spruce, and fir. The fungus disease is caused by PROLONGED WATER CONTACT on the foliage and spreads rapidly during periods of high humidity and high temperatures.

The disease begins as a small dark dot on the needle, usually towards the middle portion but can appear anywhere up and down the needle. As the disease spreads, the dot becomes larger and eventually completely envelops the needle and "cuts off" the food supply to the needle by this "girdling action." Without treatment, the condition worsens...the dots enlarge and lighten in color, the needles turn light green, then yellow, then brown, and eventually fall completely off.

HOW NEEDLECAST STARTS:

Conifers are most susceptible to needlecast in the fall of the year in September or October during prolonged periods of wet, rainy weather when temperatures are still fairly high and night temperatures are cool. NIGHT WATERING or watering in the late afternoon "anytime" during the spring or summer can also lead to needlecast problems. Early morning watering practices are best because it gives the needles ALL DAY LONG to "dry off" and disease problems are averted. Wind spreads the fungus spores from diseased needles to healthy needles in moist periods. The fungus spores "overwinter" in infected conifer needles and a conscientious effort should be made to clean up any spent needles that collect inside the conifer in crotches or against the main trunk and those that fall and accumulate on the ground. Many of these old needles harbor the disease.

HOW TO CONTROL:

We recommend FERTI-LOME BROAD SPECTRUM LIQUID FUNGICIDE, FERTI-LOME LIQUID SYSTEMIC FUNGICIDE or HI-YIELD CONSAN 20. Mix the product according to label directions and spray the entire plant until the needles on the tree begin to drip.

Whenever you begin spraying your plants for needlecast, spray the plant 3 consecutive times in a row, spacing the sprayings 5 to 7 days apart. Continue spraying at least once a month from May through September for preventative measures in the future. It is very IMPORTANT to spray the new "candles" (new pine shoots) in the spring as they begin to open. Continue spraying every 5 to 7 days until the new shoots are fully open. We are depending on these new needles to hide the damage from the fallen infected needles.

To help your conifer recuperate faster and regain a deep green color, we recommend an application of FERTI-LOME LIQUID IRON, IRONITE, or E-Z IRON. REMEMBER that it takes a pine tree THREE YEARS to put on a complete set of needles from top to bottom. Pines shed approximately 1/3 of their needles in the fall and add 1/3 new needles in the spring. It is natural for a pine to shed its oldest needles in the fall months of September/October, but unusually large amounts of shedding may indicate needlecast problems, especially if there is a lot of extra shedding of needles in the terminal branches of the tree.

If you have any question please call, write or drop by:

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