

TROUBLESHOOTING PLANT PROBLEMS

PLANT PART	SYMPTOM	POSSIBLE CAUSES
Whole plant		
	Recently transplanted plant won't grow	Drought Excess water Insufficient root system Injured during or prior to planting
	Sudden death of whole plant or part of plant	Excess fertilizer Girdling Lightning strike Weed killers
	Gradual decline of formerly healthy plant; poor growth; yellowing and dropping of leaves. Death of individual shoots	Air pollution Construction injury Disease/pests Drought Excess water or fertilizer Soil pH (acidity or alkalinity) needs adjusting
Main stem or branches		
	Malformed new growth	Insect injury Weed killers
	Shoot dieback	Borers (insects) Lack of light Improper nutrition Winter injury Construction injury Too much water Insect or disease damage Hail damage
	Twigs with healthy leaves drop to ground	Squirrel damage Twig girdlers (insects)
	Bark splits on trunk	Winter injury Lightning
	Pitch on trunk or main branches	Borers (insects)
Foliage		
	Leaves look scorched or dry	Frost injury Drought Fertilizer burn Salt damage Spray injury Fire damage Mites (insects)
	Leaves yellow or mottled in color; smaller than normal size, malformed or drop early	Improper nutrition Too much water Insect or disease injury Improper pH (acidity or alkalinity) of soil
	Wilted foliage	Drought Excess fertilizer Excess water Disease (anthracnose)
	Skeletonized leaves	Insects

PLANT PART	SYMPTOM	POSSIBLE CAUSES
Foliage (cont)		
	Curled or distorted leaves	Aphids (insects) Weed killer
	Tunnels between leaf surfaces	Leaf miners (insects)
	Chewed leaf margins	Leaf-chewing insects
	Gray color to foliage; webs may be present	Mites (insects)
	Black or brown spots on leaves	Spray injury Disease
	White powdery look to top of leaves	Spray injury Mildew
	Rolled leaves	Cold temperatures Leaf roller (insects) Drought
	Needle drop	Lack of potassium Natural needle shed (every 3 years)
	Black sooty look to leaves and stems	Aphids Fire blight
Flowers		
	Plant fails to flower	Improper pruning (wrong time of year) Improper day length Nutrient imbalance Too shady Frost damage
	Flowers fail to open properly	Drought Bacterial blight Spray injury Frost injury Insects
	Petals chewed	Grasshoppers (insects)
	Shortened flowering period	Drought High temperature Low humidity
	Flower buds split	Herbicide injury Improper moisture levels Extreme temperature
Fruit		
	Plant fails to produce fruit	Drought Improper pruning Flowers not pollinated Plant too immature
	Fruit drops at early stage of development	Insects Low fertility Drought