



This bulletin from the Cooperative Extension Plant Health Clinic (Plant Disease Clinic) is an electronic update about diseases and other problems observed in our lab each month. Input from everybody interested in plants is welcome and appreciated.

Birch

In the spring, the leaves on River birch will often become distorted with corrugations or bumpy ridges. Spiny witch-hazel gall aphids, *Hamamelistes spinosus*, are the culprit. The life cycle takes two full years to complete. Eggs are laid on witch-hazel in June and July. The eggs hatch in the spring and the nymphs feed on the flower buds. The feeding activity causes a spiny gall to form on the affected witch-hazel. Winged aphids develop inside the spiny galls, then leave and fly to birch. This generation gives birth to a scale-like generation, which hibernates on birch until the following spring. At bud break the scale-like aphids feed on the new leaves, causing them to form corrugated galls. When the aphids mature into winged adults, they migrate back to witch-hazel. Infested leaves eventually turn brown and drop from the tree. Control isn't usually warranted, because healthy birches produce a new flush of leaves to replace those lost.

Birch Spiny witch-hazel gall aphid damage-*Hamamelistes spinosus*



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Lirope

Lirope is a hardy, easy to grow perennial. It may, however, suffer from root rot, caused by *Phytophthora* spp., when planted in heavy, boggy soils. Symptoms are bright yellow leaves that appear water-soaked, discolored, and rotted at the base. The leaves become chocolate-brown near the base and are easily pulled from the crown. Avoid bringing home plants with disease symptoms. Purchase plants with healthy green foliage that is firmly attached to the crown. Avoid over-watering, plant crowding, and planting too deep. Do not plant in areas where water is prone to stand. *Phytophthora* cannot reproduce and infect in the absence of free water. If the bed is small, replacement of the soil and replanting may solve the problem as long as the plants have good drainage and are not overwatered. Fungicides such as Monterey Aliette, Mancozeb, and Subdue Maxx suppress *Phytophthora*, but they are



expensive and will not be effective as long as soil conditions remain soggy.

Lirope Phytophthora crown rot-*Phytophthora* spp.



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Mulberry

Popcorn disease of Mulberry fruit is caused by the fungus, *Ciboria carunculoides*. Only the fruit have symptoms. Initially the carpels of the fruit swell and remain a greenish color instead of ripening. The enlarged carpels of the fruit are replaced by, hardened sclerotia of the fungus, thus giving the disease the name of Popcorn disease. White mulberry varieties and hybrids are more susceptible than red or black mulberries. This disease is not considered economically important on ornamental mulberries as they are non-fruiting varieties as a rule. Popcorn disease can be a problem, however, on mulberries propagated for fruit production and can cause high yield losses. Sanitation is the best control option for homeowners. Clean up all fallen fruit and any diseased fruit still on the tree and remove from the planting.



Mulberry popcorn disease- *Ciboria carunculoides*



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Rose Slug damage



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Rose Slug damage



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Rose

An aggravating pest of roses are the larvae of sawflies, known as Rose slugs. The European rose slug, the Bristly rose slug, and the Curly rose slug cause similar damage to the foliage of roses. Rose slugs feed on the outer leaf tissue between veins, leaving the clear translucent membranes. These membranes become dry and brown when exposed to sun and air. Some species chew holes, causing skeletonization. Handpicking the larvae as soon as damage is noticed is an effective method of control. Insecticidal soaps and fine oils are effective. Systemic insecticides such as Bayer Advanced Insect Control for Trees and Shrubs will also give control.