



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.

Pine

Pine sawflies are a group of defoliating insects that feed on the foliage of conifers. Depending on species, there is one to three or more generations a year. Sawfly feeding activity causes growth loss, and can result in tree death from secondary invasions of bark beetles and pine sawyers. Adult sawflies resemble large flies, but are really broadwaisted wasps. Larvae are spotted or stripped, depending on species, and resemble moth or butterfly caterpillars. Adult female sawflies make slits in pine needles with their saw-like ovipositors. The larvae feed on the needles for three to four weeks. Mature larvae spin a cocoon that looks a lot like a bud tip. Adults emerge and begin the cycle over again. Natural enemies, lack of adequate food, disease, or unfavorable weather usually combine to control sawfly populations. When these natural controls fail, large populations can cause severe damage. In home landscapes, larvae can be handpicked or shaken off and destroyed if they are reachable. Products containing acephate, or azadiractin or bifenthrin, or carbaryl, or cyfluthrin, or esfenvalerate, or permethrin, or spinosad may be used.

Pine sawfly damage



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White pine sawfly adult- *Neodiprion pinum*



USDA Forest Service - Region 8 - Southern Archive, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org



Blackheaded pine sawfly adult-
Neodiprion excitans



Gerald J. Lenhard Louisiana State Univ, Bugwood.org

Blackheaded pine sawfly larvae-
Neodiprion excitans



Arnold T. Drooz, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

Redheaded pine sawfly larvae-
Neodiprion lecontei



Ronald F. Billings, Texas Forest Service, Bugwood.org

Feather grass

Mexican feather grass, (*Nassella tenuissima*), is a graceful ornamental grass native to west Texas, New Mexico, and the north central states of Mexico. Feather grass has proven to be winter-hardy as far north as Zone 5. Mexican feather grass gets its name from its slender, hairlike leaves and airy, cascading habit. Feather grass grows 1-2 feet tall and 2-4 feet wide. It grows best in full sun in soil with good drainage, and a pH of 5.8-8.0. Once established, Mexican feather grass is extremely drought tolerant and pest free. However, when its cultural needs are not met, some disease problems may arise. Species of *Bipolaris* and *Exserohilum* can cause leaf, crown, and root rot diseases in grasses. Lesions on the leaves are irregularly shaped and brownish green to black. Severely infected leaves may wither and die, turning tan to straw colored. These fungi infect the foliage of warm season grasses during cool, wet periods from autumn through spring. Often we see these disease on grass that has had high doses of nitrogen fertilizers in the spring. Mexican feather grass requires no supplemental fertilization. It does very well on poor soils. Feather grass should be watered deeply but infrequently. Watering in the morning so the foliage can dry quickly is ideal. Fungicides may be helpful if the disease is severe. Products containing chlorothalonil or mancozeb or propiconazole or iprodione or myclobutanil may be applied. Diseased foliage should be pruned to the ground in the fall.



Mexican feather grass-*Nassella tenuissima*



Photo courtesy of Paul Jones

Mexican feather grass-*Nassella tenuissima* with bipolaris lesions



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Redbud

Eastern redbud, *Cercis canadensis*, is a prized native ornamental tree. It is found growing naturally in eastern North America from southern Ontario, Canada, south to northern Florida. Redbud are small trees, growing 20-30 feet tall with a 25-35 foot spread. They are loved primarily for the thousands of rosy-pink flowers they produce in the spring. A common leaf disease found on Arkansas redbuds is bacterial leaf spot caused by a species of *Pseudomonas*. This is most severe during cool, wet springs. Trees grown in shade with poor air circulation are most susceptible. Symptoms are small, oval to irregular spots with a water-soaked or yellow halo. Severe infections can cause premature leaf drop. All fallen leaves should be raked up and removed from the planting area. Copper fungicides applied during the dormant season and at bud break in the spring help control bacterial leaf spot.

Redbud bacterial leaf spot-*pseudomonas spp.*



Sherrie Smith University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension