

## Special points of interest:

- *Pine Health: take action now*
- *Thousand cankers of walnut update*



Pine wilt

It is that time of the year that pine wilt should be addressed before the spring months. Currently about 95% of the trees infected are showing pine wilt symptoms of complete death or severe decline. Trees affected in Kansas commonly are Austrian, Scotch, and mugo (shrub like) pines.

All branches and trunk material thicker than 1 1/2 inches in diameter should be collected and disposed of when pine wilt strikes since disease causing nematodes are in that wood.

How to tell if a dead pine tree died from pine wilt:

1. **Is the tree or shrub a Austrian, Scotch, or mugo pine?** The disease does

not affect other evergreens such as cedar or junipers. Ponderosa pine is not considered a host in Kansas. White pines have few reports but get the disease.

2. Cut a branch (dead needles still attached) near the trunk. Press your skin on the cut. **Is the cut wood sticky from resin?** If not then it is a good suspect for pine wilt since the nematode kills the resin cells stopping resin flow.
3. If the tree cut is not resinous and one of the three species listed, **have the plant tested** or just removed. A wood sample taken near the

trunk at shoulder height from 2-3 branches is sufficient for testing. Contact your local county extension office, local KFS forester, or our office for more instruction if needed.

Removing the tree from the property will break the disease cycle in the upcoming spring and summer months.

Do not save for firewood since it can provide a source of disease infestation to healthy trees.

Chipping the wood into pieces of less than 1 1/2 inches or so is an alternative if mulch is desired. It is important not to use these chips directly on pines but on other trees such as maples, oaks, etc..

Other disposal treatments include burning and burying.

## If only the pine tips or branches are dead:

Pine tip blight, flat headed borers, IPS beetles or drought can be problems that also affect pines. Just recently I visited Beloit and with the help of Jenae Ryan, KSU extension, we assessed pines for disease issues. What we found was a lot of pine tip blight had affected the Austrian pines in and around the community and linked to a severe hail storm during Labor Day of last year. The hail caused a lot of wounds that the disease fungus invaded.

**The point being is that a lot of our pine health issues are weather related in some form**

**or another.**

Remember, Kansas does not have a native pine. The environment has been the limiting issue. Therefore, we need to be good stewards of pines by providing management inputs that address stresses and the proverbial “not put all our eggs in one basket”.

**Late winter and early spring are the best time to prune out dead limbs.** If the tree has less than 30% of the crown affected, the tree may be salvageable although it depends on what caused the injury. Consult a certified tree

arborist in your area or again your local county extension office or KFS forester.

If the tree is completely dead or where the crown is affected more than 30%, tree removal is highly recommended. The weakened tree will host a lot of nasty insects and disease. Do not use for firewood.

When planting trees, mix species and growth habits. **If you are planting only one species then one event can spell disaster.**

In the case of broken leader or hail injury, pines may out grow it with some TLC. Watch the tree(s) 1 yr.

Pine tip blight



