Taking Distance Diagnostic Pictures for Plant Problems
August 2023

Make sure the client sends you, or you take at least seven pictures:

Landscape pictures help give context.

From this picture we can tell that the plant:
- Is near a brick wall and has afternoon shade.
- Close to a down spout.
- Possibly under a larger tree and may have noon shade.
- Well mulched, so no competition from weeds or grass.
- Not over mulched (volcano mulch)
- Plants are spaced apart for good air flow.

Landscape as a whole

Front of symptomatic leaves

Back of symptomatic leaves

Some diseases or insects attack the front and back of the leaves differently. Having a front and back can help narrow the possible pests.

Tip: Use your hand or a piece of paper to force the camera to focus near the leaves.
Branch or stem

Some pests attack the stem, causing leaves further out to look sick. Checks stems for spots, open wounds, or cankers.

If possible, cut open a stem with symptomatic leaves. This helps check for vascular trouble.

Base with mulch set aside

The base may show root girdling or damage. It will also show if the mulch is too high, or if the crown was planted too deep.

The trunk may show cracking, oozing from a wound, insect damage, or animal marks.