Taking Distance Diagnostic Pictures for Plant Problems
October 2023

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

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

Examples of why...

Planted in a small concrete hole, and near car engines.

Good field picture, shows random nature of spread

Bruce Steelman, Lincoln County
Front and back of 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.

Examples of why...

- Oak lace bug eggs – leaf underside

- Soybean rust causes pimple-like pustules that are filled with tan spores form on the lower surface of infected leave.

[Link to additional information](https://pddc.wisc.edu/2015/08/16/soybean-rust/)
Branch or stem

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

Example of why...

Blueberry stem canker

Crape myrtle bark scale
Stem or stalk cut open

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

Examples of why...

Possible verticillium wilt

Tobacco black shank
Trunk

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

Examples of why...

Canker and bird pecking holes

Look for cracking
Base of plant

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.

Base of trunk

Examples of why...

No tree root flare visible. Planted too deep or mulched too high.

Volcano mulch, base of tree may rot.

Lee Rumble, Knox County
Check roots and fruits

Roots and Fruit rots are also helpful

Suspected heat at first, but was fusarium in the lab

Bruce Steelman, Lincoln County

Suspected anthracnose

Chris Ramsey, Sullivan County

Billy Ward, Johnson County

Suspected anthracnose