

Taking Distance Diagnostic Pictures for Plant Problems

October 2023

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



Landscape as a whole

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.

Examples of why...



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



Bruce Steelman, Lincoln County

Good field picture, shows random
nature of spread

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.



Front of symptomatic leaves



Back of symptomatic 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
leaf.

<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.



Branch or stem

Example of why...



Chris Ramsey, Sullivan County

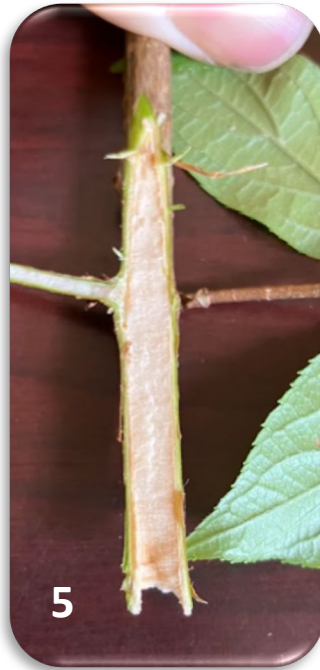
Blueberry stem canker



Crape myrtle bark scale

Stem or stalk cut open

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

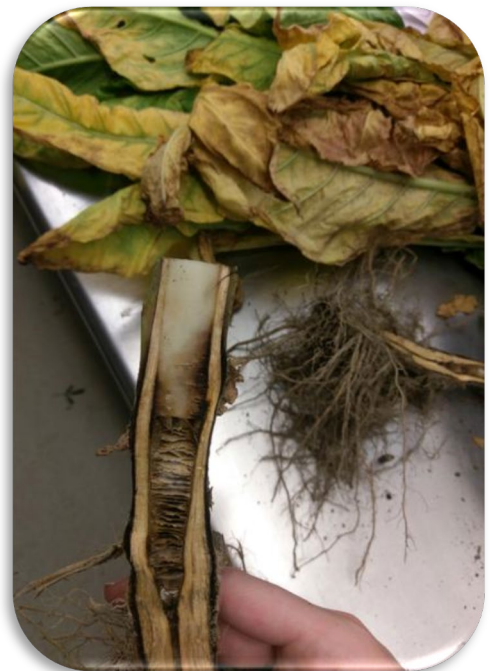


Cut stem

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.



Lee Rumble, Knox County

Volcano mulch, base of tree may rot.

Check roots and fruits

Roots and Fruit rots are also helpful



Bruce Steelman, Lincoln County

Suspected heat at first, but was
fusarium in the lab



Chris Ramsey, Sullivan County

Suspected anthracnose



Billy Ward, Johnson County

Suspected anthracnose