

DOVE
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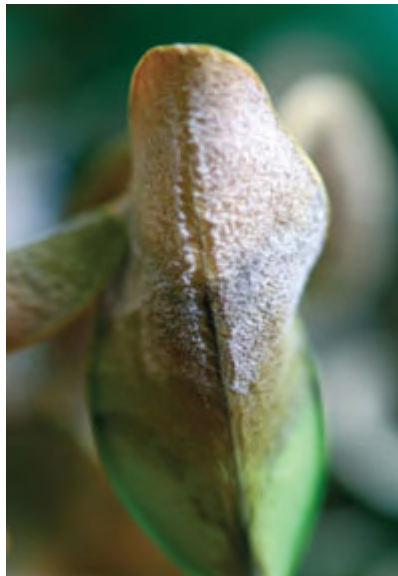
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Information

Box blight

This disease is now widespread in the UK having been first recognised in the mid 1990's. It affects *Buxus sempervirens* and its cultivars – these include *B. suffruticosa*, *B. variegata*, and *B. elegantissima* amongst others.



This disease favours both humid and dry weather conditions - infections can establish within 48 hours and can peak in the autumn months. Spores can overwinter and are not affected by frost. In the summer months, spores can be affected if temperatures exceed 30°C.

Identification

There are two species of box blight – *Cylindrocladium buxicola* and *Volutella buxi*. Both can occur together and identification in the early stages can be difficult as the leaf symptoms can be similar to other cultural problems. Spotting and streaking can occur along with greying leaves for the *Cylindrocladium* species and pinkish leaves on the *Volutella* species. With significant infections, plants can defoliate and show dieback on stems, leading to large brown, dead sections.

Use plant protection products safely. Always read the label and product information before use

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Distribution

- *Volutella buxi* infects wound sites and can be more of an issue after trimming.
- *Cylindrocladium buxicola* infects through leaf stomata. The spores spread in moist conditions and penetrate the stomata.

Spores can be spread from plant to plant, on soils, animals and insects and also through water splash.



Cultural control of box blight

- Cut out affected areas and destroy the prunings.
- Burn any leaves that fall through the year as they can harbour spores which can bounce back onto healthy plants when it rains.
- Composting affected leaves may not destroy the fungus – spores can remain viable on decomposing material for up to 11 months.
- Pruning will cause wounds that will expose plants to further infection so make sure pruning does not take place in cool, wet weather and tools are kept sharp and disinfected with approved products such as Jet 5 or Menno Florades.
- If plants require irrigation then a directed spray is less likely to increase the risk of the spread of this disease than overhead irrigation.

Fungicides

Fungicides that can help to provide control during the growing season on commercial nurseries include Signum (EAMU 2012-2141) or Switch.

Retail products that can offer contact control include fungicides containing triticonazole e.g. Fungus Clear Ultra or tebuconazole e.g. Fungus Fighter Concentrate. Any dead or diseased foliage that does not get a fungicide covering may have the ability to re-infect plants.

In amenity vegetation situations, products available include Signum (EAMU 2012-2317).

Contact the office for copies of the EAMUs (off-label approvals).

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