Getting The Black Out Of Roses

One of the biggest problems facing homeowners who grow roses is black spot. This fungal disease can reduce the quality and life expectancy of a rose plant. Roses can also have poor performance from other factors such as root stocks and scions that are not suitable for Florida, under watering and under fertilization.

Symptoms of this disease appear as black spots on the upper surface of the leaf. Yellowing around the spots on infected leaves also occurs. Leaf defoliation can be severe on some cultivars of roses.

Spores from the previous season are spread by rain or overhead irrigation. The spores must be wet for several hours to infect plant tissues. Therefore, it is important to water early in the morning to allow the plant to dry off quickly as the sun rises. Drip irrigation is a

Black spot will cause a general weakening of the plant so that progressively fewer and fewer blooms are formed if the disease is left unchecked.

Photo Credits: Theresa Friday, Santa Rosa County
good way to keep water off leaves and canes.

It takes three to 16 days for the symptoms to appear after infection. The optimum temperature for disease development is 64°F. Spore germination occurs from 59 to 81°F. With such a wide temperature range, this disease can continue to develop as long as the moisture is available during the season.

Cultural practices such as planting resistant cultivars, removing and disposing of fallen leaves, pruning of canes late in the winter before new shoots are produced and proper irrigation will reduce the chances of black spot.

When using chemical control, apply a protectant fungicide at bud break and bimonthly until leaves are completely expanded. During the summer, fungicide applications every 7-14 days may be necessary to manage the disease.

Fungicides labeled for the control of black spot of roses include: captan, chlorothalonil (Ferti-lome® Liquid fungicide, Bonide® Fungonil Multipurpose Fungicide, Ortho Garden Disease Control), copper sulfate, mancozeb, sulfur, neem oil, thiophanate-methyl (Ferti-lome® Halt Systemic Fungicide, Green Light® Systemic Fungicide) and triforine (Ortho® Rose Pride Rose & Shrub Disease Control). To reduce fungicide resistance, rotate among products with different modes of action.

Source: Jozer Mangandi, graduate student, Department of Environmental Horticulture; Natalia A. Peres, assistant professor, Department of Plant Pathology, Gulf Coast Research and Education Center (REC)--Balm; Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Document PP268.

What Is This Alien Stuff On My Plants' Bark

Throughout the year I get many calls asking "what is this mossy-like stuff growing on my landscape plant's bark?" For the most part the calls are in the spring time when people have come out of hibernation from the winter and see their landscape plants covered with alien-looking growth. Well I am here to say it is not alien, though it may look like it is. These are lichens.

Lichens often get mistaken for some unusual fungus that is killing their trees. However lichens are not single organisms, but rather a combination of two organisms that live together in a beneficial way. There are over 20,000 different types of lichens found in nature. Lichens consist of a fungus and cannot survive on its own; therefore, the fungus is more dependent upon its algae partner which produces enough food for both to survive.

Lichens are also very different from plants because they can survive a complete loss of water. During this time, brittle pieces that flake off can later grow into new lichens. When moisture becomes available again, the lichen absorbs water and returns to their fleshy form. So with this stated, the lichens growing on trees and shrubs are not parasites and do not harm the plants in any way. Lichens use plants as support structures to become established.

Source: Ken Rudisill
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There are four different forms of lichens found, crustose
(crust-like, growing tight against the substrate), squamulose (tightly clustered and slightly flattened pebble-like units), foliose (leaf like, with flat sheets of tissue not tightly bound), and fruticose (free-standing branching tubes). Colors range from white to gray, green, red, yellow, and black. Lichens commonly found in our area are in the crustose, foliose, or fruticose form, and are white, gray, or gray-green in color.

Because lichens produce chemicals, they have very few natural predators. However, the most serious threat to lichens is air pollution. Most lichens will not grow in a polluted atmosphere and therefore you should be glad to see lichen here or there in your yard, as this is an indication that the air is relatively clean.

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Do Something Wild In Your Backyard!

Are you a wildlife enthusiast? With over 1,200 types of animals in Florida, the odds are you have creatures living in your backyard besides pets. The Florida Backyard Landscapes for Wildlife Program is designed for homeowners interested in creating more backyard wildlife habitat. Participants in the program complete an application listing specific actions taken to attract animals, such as planting food sources or providing houses or cover, along with the types of animals typically observed. The application also includes a rough sketch of the landscape design showing locations of feeders, nectar plants, water sources, and other features. Once approved, individuals can have their yards certified as an official wildlife habitat from IFAS Extension, and receive a certificate and a yard sign stating, “I did something WILD in my yard!”

At any point, participants can request information from their local horticulture or natural resources Extension Agent on the best way to design and maintain wildlife habitat. For an application, contact your local Extension Office or visit the Wildlife Extension website at http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/landscaping/fblw/ for more information.

Gopher tortoises are on the Florida endangered species list, and are typically found in upland pine flatwoods or coastal dunes. Their large burrows also provide habitat for other animals.

Photo Credits: Carrie T. Stevenson, Brooker Creek Nature Preserve--2009

For bird lovers, the Florida Public Bird Watching Program may be of interest. This program allows participants to enter bird survey data on a public website, helping homeowners and researchers keep track of migrating and resident species throughout the year. The information can help property owners attract particular species and create more ecologically sound landscapes. Bird surveys may be submitted from anywhere in the state, including parks, yards or neighborhood common areas. For more information, visit http://bird.ifas.ufl.edu.

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Common Summer Tree Problems

It is that time of year again when I begin getting an overwhelming amount of calls on tree problems. Many insect and disease problems have had sufficient time to develop and damage a tree. Non biological stresses such as lightning, drought and heat stresses also have weakened some trees. During the summer, temperatures are high and the physiological process of trees such as transpiration and respiration are running at peak rates. So if any part of a tree (roots, etc.) is compromised, the tree quickly can become overwhelmed and begin to decline. Over time, this decline can get to the point where we see visible signs that we can recognize. These visible signs may include changing leaf color, leaves turning brown, loss of leaves, visible lightning strikes or sap (often being discolored) oozing from a tree.

Once these signs show themselves sometimes it may be too late to do anything. Often, especially when leaves only turn partially brown or are eaten by an insect, the damage is only temporary if the tree is not under additional stresses like being a newly planted tree.

Other times, the thing to do is remove the tree to help prevent the spread of this problem to other trees. This is often the case when pine beetles are discovered in a tree. Trees that are already turning brown are just breeding areas for more beetles. If this is happening, adjacent pine trees will be at risk. Then you are likely to have more trees to remove in the long run.

If it is an insect consuming leaves, such as a caterpillar, and the tree is not under stress I often recommend to just let nature take its course. Probably something else like birds will consume the caterpillars or their adult butterflies and moths. This then helps adults raise their babies, as birds are often looking for high protein sources like insects to feed to them this time of year.

Diagnosing a tree problem and finding a cure is not always easy. Generally the best thing to do to keep trees healthy is to have a good mulch bed underneath their crown so the soil is protected and the nutrients that are in leaves and seeds, etc. are recycled. Also, growing trees in groups with proper spacing allows trees to have protection from each other but minimizes competition between them. Trees in this situation are often less stressed and thus less likely to succumb to insect and disease problems.

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Orchard Orb-Weaver Spider

In many aspects of our lives, the color red often puts us at attention. This is true in relation to insects and spiders as well. When we see red markings on garden creatures, we know to be cautious. Some of the most commonly recognized spiders with red markings are the widows. It is important to learn to recognize widows because we do have them in our area; however, not all spiders with red markings on their body are poisonous to people.

The orchard orb-weaver is just one of our many orb weaver spiders that help manage insects in a landscape.

Photo Credits: http://frank.itlab.us/venusta/
One very common spider found in most every garden is the orchard orb-weaver. It is a small spider with an abdomen longer than wide. There are two red orange triangles on the underside of the abdomen (not an hourglass) and often red spots on the upperside of the abdomen. These spiders may also have green, yellow, and white markings on their bodies. The spider builds small spiral orb webs often situated among the branches of shrubs. The web is usually slanted instead of being straight up and down in the shrubs. Females hang in the webs waiting for an insect meal. Widow webs tend to be irregular without any circular patterns. Most widows are found in less open areas.

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FAQ's: Crape Myrtles, the Lilac Of The South

Without question, the crape myrtle is the premier summer flowering tree along the Gulf Coast. All cultivars prefer full sun, good air movement and well drained soil. Even when planted in the "right place," crape myrtles may develop problems.

My crape myrtle is reluctant to bloom. What's wrong?

Crape myrtles flower most heavily in full, uninterrupted sunlight. Plants that have become shaded by a nearby tree will gradually reduce their bloom output. Another reason may be frequent irrigation and overfertilization. These practices promote vegetative growth at the expense of flowering. Also, in extreme drought conditions flowering may be delayed. The bottom line is that crape myrtles bloom when they are happy. Given the proper environment and good cultural practices, your plants should bloom normally.

The leaves of my crape myrtles are covered with yellowish-green insects. Many leaves have developed yellow spots and there is black, sticky substance on the leaves. What should I do?

It sounds like you have an infestation of a sucking insect, probably the crape myrtle aphid. Aphids feed on plant juices and excrete a sticky substance known as honeydew. The honeydew falls on the leaves below them and frequently a black mildew, called sooty mold, grows on the honeydew.

Typically, if the crape myrtle is large and healthy, treatment may not be necessary. However, if you are seeing significant damage, you may need to control the aphids. In north Florida, crape myrtle aphid populations generally peak between late June and early August. Therefore, control measures should begin by the first week of July.

The larvae of a lady beetle (the larger insect) will feed on large quantities of crape myrtle aphids (the smaller insect) and provide natural control when aphid numbers are low.

Photo Credits: Theresa Friday, Santa Rosa County Extension

The least toxic chemical controls include insecticidal soap or horticultural oil. Be sure to follow the label directions. Because aphids reproduce so quickly, repeated applications may be necessary. For other options, refer to the UF/IFAS publication, Insect Management on Landscape Plants, at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IG013.

One thing to consider is that aphids are food for many of our area's beneficial insects. Read more about this amazing interaction at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN663, a UF/IFAS publication on the Crapemyrtle Aphid.
Why is the bark falling off of my crape myrtles?

This is absolutely and totally a normal occurrence. Many crape myrtles have exfoliating bark. It peels off in long hunks, often exposing glossy, honey-color trunks. Some cultivars, such as Natchez, have beautiful cinnamon-colored bark. In all cases, the peeling bark is completely harmless.

I have sprouts coming up around my crape myrtle tree. How can I stop them? Can I transplant them?

Crape myrtles generally require little pruning. However, "suckers" or water sprouts may develop along the lower portions of main stems or from roots. These should be removed when using crape myrtles as trees.

Photo Credits: Theresa Friday, Santa Rosa County Extension

Crape myrtles, like yaupon hollies, will throw out root sprouts. Left in place, they will create a thicket of crape myrtle plants. Assuming you do not want that, you should dig and remove them using a sharp spade. The entire process probably won't take more than a few minutes each year. You cannot spray them, since they are tethered to the mother plant. Since crape myrtles are propagated by cuttings, their root systems are the same as the top growth, so these sprouts can be used as a means of starting new and identical plants.

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Wisteria Gone Wild

Q. We planted Wisteria for its beautiful spring flowers and it grew and grew and took over everything. Now we’re trying to get rid of it. New plants are sprouting everywhere - up to ten feet away from the original plant. Is there a way to rid our landscape of this now wild plant?

A. Chinese Wisteria, *Wisteria sinensis*, can be a big problem to control. I've seen entire fields taken over by it. Yet, many people wonder why you would want to kill a beautiful plant like Wisteria. It's possible to keep it in bounds for a while (possibly years) in the middle of a lawn with its new shoots arising from roots being routinely mowed. But in many cases, given enough time, shoots coming from roots will escape and then begin to take over - growing on adjacent property, climbing trees, etc.

Making cut before herbicide application
Photo Credits: Larry Williams & Sheila Dunning, Okaloosa County Extension Agents
In order to control an established vine, you must be persistent. Your best bet, outside of moving, is to use a "cut stump" treatment on the main plant and every shoot that sprouts. Use an herbicide that contains triclopyr. Some brand names include Enforcer Brush Killer, Ortho Brush-B-Gon, Ferti-lome Brush Killer-Stump Killer, Garlon (forestry use) and Remedy (farm use). Cut the main stem (trunk) as close to the ground as possible and as level as possible to facilitate application of the herbicide to prevent sprouting. It is critical to immediately apply the product to the freshly cut "stump." Stumps that are not treated with the herbicide will sprout. Always follow label directions and precautions and be very careful to not get the product on adjacent desirable plants, including their roots.

Other invasive, undesirable woody plants can be controlled using this method such as Chinese tallow (popcorn tree), Chinese privet (Ligustrum sinensis) and Japanese honeysuckle (Lonicera japonica).

Application of triclopyr herbicide to cut stump
Photo Credits: Larry Williams & Sheila Dunning, Okaloosa County Extension Agents

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Fall Vegetable Gardening Is Right Around The Corner

With the outside temps and the humidity into the 90’s now, you may not think about fall gardening at all. There seems to be a renewed interest in vegetable gardening and fall is a great time for growing vegetables, especially our greens and leafy ones. It is not too early to plan for it, especially if this is the first time you have tried to do a garden in the fall.

First, make a plan to plant what you and your family like to prepare and eat. Write down the names of the vegetables and allocate space for each by what they grow in (rows or beds). If you are preparing raised beds for the first time, or in a new garden spot, take a soil sample and send it to a reputable lab. University labs, such as the University of Florida, have the expertise and internal quality controls to give recommendations on garden and other crops and lawns. Pull your samples soon and be able to apply any recommended lime or fertilizers in a timely manner. Lime usually takes 2-3 months to dissolve and become available to the plants. Be sure to ro-
tate root crops such as carrots and potatoes to new areas every third year to avoid nematode and fruit quality problems.

Practice field sanitation—remove all summer grown plants first. Clear a strip around the garden at least six feet wide so that thrips, whiteflies and aphids will not have instant or immediate access to your fresh, green vegetables. Weed control in strips will help cut down on host plants for these insects.

Plant or transplant resistant varieties of the cool season crops when they are available. Check with your Extension Agent for a list of disease resistant hybrids that are offered to the homeowner. Mosaic viruses and spotted wilt viruses have no chemical cures presently. Some beans, snow peas, and English peas are resistant to certain diseases, but will need to be monitored for fungi after leaves form. Use fungicide treated seed to help ensure a good stand. Some yellow crooknecks and straight-necks squashes, such as Prelude and Multi-Pik, are resistant to mosaic viruses, but will still need insecticides to control the rindworms, cucumber beetles, and others that may attack the stalks and young fruits.

Solving Fruit Tree Problems

There are several insects that may cause problems for fruits. Some of these insects target the leaves while others target the flowers or fruits. Some common insects that may attack fruit trees include thrips, weevils, aphids, spider mites, caterpillars, stinkbugs, leaf footed bugs, plant bugs, sap bugs, and borers. Thrips and some weevils attack the blooms. Aphids, spider mites, caterpillar, and beetles will most often cause damage to the foliage. Stinkbugs, plant bugs, leaf footed bugs, weevils, and sap bugs are usually problems on the fruit. When it comes to insect management, chemical control is the most effective means of reducing populations and damage. Some common insecticides labeled for fruits are listed below.

Bifenthrin (Capture) - aphids, bagworms, beetles, borers, caterpillars, grasshoppers, lacehoppers, leaffoppers, leafminers, leafrollers, mealybugs, mites, thrips and whiteflies.

Carbaryl (Sevin, Bayer Advanced Complete Insect Killer for Gardens) – aphids, bagworms, beetles, borers, caterpillars, gall insects, grasshoppers, lacebugs, leaffoppers, leafminers, leafrollers, scales (crawlers stage) spittlebugs, thrips and whiteflies.

Imidacloprid (Admire) - aphids, beetles, borers, lacebugs, leaffoppers, leafminers, mealybugs, scales (crawlers stage), thrips and whiteflies.

Malathion (Ortho Malathion Plus Insect Spray for Gardens) - aphids, lacebugs, mites, scales (crawlers stage), thrips and whiteflies.

Permethrin (Ambush, Ortho Bug B Gon) - aphids, bag-
worms, beetles, borers, caterpillars, lacebugs, leafhoppers, leafminers, leafrollers, and mealybugs,

**Horticulture Oils** (Sunspray Ultra) - aphids, lacebugs, leafhoppers, mites, scales (crawlers stage) and whiteflies

Fruit trees can also be infected by several plant diseases. These pathogens may include anthracnose, rosette, orange rust, leaf spot, and numerous viruses. These diseases can severely limit fruit production. To prevent many of these diseases, fungicides like azoxyrstobrin (Quadris or Amistar), chlorothalonil (Bravo), mancozeb (Dithane & Manzate), and thiophanate methyl(Topsin) may be applied along with sanitation by proper weed and insect control and planting resistant cultivars. Unfortunately, there is no cure for viruses--only prevention. Some common fungicides labeled for fruits are listed below.

**Azoystrobin** (Quadris, Amistar) - *Alternaria leaf spot, anthracnose, leaf spot, downy mildew, powdery mildew and Rhizoctonia*

**Chlorothalonil** (Ortho® Max™ Garden Disease Control, Ferti-lome Broad Spectrum Landscape & Garden Fungicide) - *Alternaria leaf spot, anthracnose, cercospora leaf spot, downey mildew and powdery mildew*

**Mancozeb** (Dithane, Manzate) - *Alternaria leaf spot, anthracnose, cercospora leaf spot and downey mildew*

**Thiophanate methyl** (Topsin) - *Anthracnose, botrytis, powdery mildew and leaf spots*

When applying pesticides, make sure that the pesticide is labeled for the desired crop and remember to always read and follow pesticide labels exactly to avoid unnecessary crop injury!!!
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