

## WHAT IS BOXWOOD BLIGHT?

Boxwood blight is a serious fungal disease of boxwood that results in defoliation and decline of susceptible boxwood, and has become quite prevalent in NJ and PA over the past year. Once introduced to a landscape, boxwood blight is very difficult and costly to control with fungicides.

<b>MODERATELY RESISTANT BOXWOOD CULTIVARS</b>	<i>B. microphylla</i> 'Winter Gem' <i>B. sempervirens</i> 'Dee Runk' <i>B. sempervirens</i> 'Fastigiata' <i>Buxus</i> 'Green Gem' <i>B. microphylla</i> 'John Baldwin'
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## WHAT IT DOES

Symptoms include brown leaf spots that lead to defoliation and black streaking on boxwood stem tissue. Some cultivars of boxwood can harbor the boxwood blight pathogen, yet show no symptoms.

## HOW IT SPREADS

- via the sticky spores of the boxwood blight fungus
- through infected plant material and/or contaminated tools or equipment, such as spray hoses, pruning tools, wheelbarrows, tarps, vehicles, clothing, or shoes

**SCAN HERE**

**FOR A DETAILED PDF ON BOXWOOD BLIGHT**



**PLEASE NOTE:**

**As of 2019, boxwoods are exempt from our guarantee policy** due to boxwood blight in the region and how easily the disease is transmitted.

# BOXWOOD BLIGHT

— INFO ON —  
**MANAGEMENT & PREVENTION**



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## WHAT TO DO IF YOUR BOXWOODS HAVE BOXWOOD BLIGHT

- Infested plant debris should be removed by raking, sweeping, or vacuuming, then bagged and taken to the landfill.
- Debris can be buried 2' deep in soil away from landscape plantings.
- If boxwood leaf debris has been incorporated into the soil, removing soil to a depth of 8" to 12" may help eliminate survival structures of the pathogen.
- Do not compost diseased plant material.
- Be aware that removing diseased boxwood and leaf debris will not eradicate the boxwood blight fungal pathogen from the location, since the pathogen produces long-lived survival structures that can persist in the soil for 5 to 6 years.
- Promptly begin a preventative fungicide spray program on any susceptible boxwood in the landscape to prevent further disease outbreaks. Repeat fungicide applications (7- to 14-day intervals, according to product label) throughout the growing season for the life of the boxwood plants.
- Monitor boxwood weekly during the growing season for symptoms of boxwood blight. Remove any symptomatic plants/debris/soil.
- Minimize the chance of spreading boxwood blight by sanitizing shoes, gloves, clothing, equipment and tools by sanitizing between plants/plantings.

## FUNGICIDE MANAGEMENT OF BOXWOOD BLIGHT

### **Important considerations when deciding whether to implement a preventative fungicide management program for boxwoods:**

1. Fungicides cannot eradicate the disease from infected plants.
2. Once boxwood blight is present, it is very difficult to control. Fungicide applications that are begun after the disease is already present do not provide acceptable disease control.
3. Fungicides labeled for use by home growers are protectant fungicides and must be used preventatively.
4. An effective preventative fungicide spray program will require repeated applications (at 7- to 14-day intervals, depending on product label and environmental conditions) of fungicides throughout the growing season.
5. Post-growing season: Warm temperatures with leaf wetness results in high boxwood blight disease pressure, so if temperatures are over 60°F and a rain event is expected, a preventative fungicide spray should be in place post-season as well.
6. Thorough fungicide coverage of boxwood foliage is difficult, yet necessary for protection from the disease.

Currently, effective fungicide options for home growers are limited, while professional applicators in the home landscape have more product options.

## MINIMIZING THE CHANCES OF BOXWOOD BLIGHT

### **Minimize leaf wetness and promote good air circulation in boxwood plantings to minimize disease pressure.**

- Choose cultivars that have a more open-growth habit (e.g. *Buxus microphylla* cultivars vs. *B. sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa').
- Avoid overhead irrigation.
- Ensure good air circulation in plantings by providing adequate spacing between plants.

### **Mulch boxwood plantings to reduce the spread by splashing water.**

### **Avoid working on boxwoods when foliage is wet, when it is more likely to be spread.**

### **Practice good sanitation practices to avoid spreading infected material.**

- Sanitize pruning tools and other tools/equipment/clothing/tarps.
- Bag and dispose of all boxwood debris in the landfill or bury 2' deep in soil away from boxwood plantings.
- Be aware that allowing boxwood tippers onto your property to collect greenery may increase the risk of introduction of boxwood blight.

**Discuss your concern with any landscape professionals that you use about boxwood blight, and learn about their approaches to management and prevention.**