

Fungicide A Preventive, Not A Cure

Dear Plant Doctor: Hello, me again. This time I have got a problem with my dogwood. Enclosed is a sample. The fungus(?) on this limb seems to be also attacking the trunk.

What is this stuff? How can I combat it?
I appreciate all your help.—Wilmington

Answer: The twigs you enclosed in your letter do indeed have a fungus on them. However, I cannot accurately identify the responsible villain with such a small sample.

Dogwood (*Cornus florida*) is prone to several dozen serious fungal disease problems. Common diseases in eastern North Carolina include the twig blights (*Myxosporium* sp., *Cryptosporium* sp. and *Sphaeropsis* sp.), dieback diseases such as *Botryosphaeria* sp. and crown cankers, *Phytophthora* spp.

No fungicide currently manufactured and labeled for dogwood will cure any of these diseases. Fungicides are primarily effective in prevention of disease on plants vulnerable to infection.

Once a woody plant contracts a disease, resins and other substances are secreted by the plant to partition the infected area off from healthy tissue. If the plant is weak, then the disease can spread throughout living and non-living parts of the plant and will usually cause the decline or death of the plant.

The best solution to your problem is to prune out all infected portions of the dogwood tree. Do not use tar or other paints to dress the wounds. Most wound dressing can actually encourage disease.

Fertilize your dogwood immediately after flowering with one cup of 8-8-8 fertilizer for every inch of trunk diameter growth (at ground level). Distribute fertilizer uniformly within the drip-line under the canopy of the tree.

Hope for the best. Good luck!

Dear Plant Doctor: I live smack in the center of the Sandhills and it gets very hot in the summer. I have tried to grow Kentucky bluegrass and, despite a lot of watering, it will not grow.

I sowed tall fescue (Rebel II) in mid-October and it is looking beautiful. Should I fertilize now or later? What kind of fertilizer is best? How should I best control spring weeds in tall fescue?

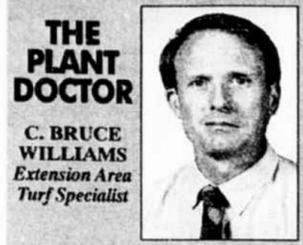
William Gause DAR Chapter Marks Its 10th Anniversary

A presentation on the history of its first 10 years highlighted the Jan. 15 meeting of the William Gause DAR Chapter.

Gwen Causey of Supply, chapter historian, compiled the history and presented it to chapter members. Mary Lou White of Shallotte, regent, presided at the meeting held at Woodburn Presbyterian Church in Leland.

The local chapter of the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, held its organizational meeting Nov. 27, 1983, with 18 women as the organizing members.

The chapter was named for William Gause Jr., who headed the Committee of Safety for Brunswick County. He served as a soldier from the Wilmington District and served



THE PLANT DOCTOR
C. BRUCE WILLIAMS
Extension Area Turf Specialist

I thank you in advance for this information.—Pinehurst

Answer: I think you will find that tall fescue does no better than Kentucky bluegrass in the Sandhills. Tall fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*) is a cool-season perennial turf grass that is well adapted to the clay- or loam-type soils of the North Carolina mountains and piedmont. Tall fescue can be grown in sandy soils and the coastal plain if properly fertilized, irrigated and mowed, but the resulting lawn is not usually worth the expense or effort. High fungicide use will be required in the summer to prevent brown patch damage. Nematodes, insects and other pests will cause problems during the hot, humid summer months that will be very difficult to control.

If you insist on growing tall fescue, plan on cutting the lawn no lower than 3.5 to 4 inches during the summer. Lower mowing heights will result in stand loss. Using four to seven pounds per 1,000 square feet, fertilize with slow release 16-4-8 or 15-5-10 fertilizer in January, September and November.

Broadleaf weed control can easily be accomplished with commercial mixtures of 2,4D, dicamba and mecoprop herbicides. Weeds can also be removed from the lawn manually with a weeding fork or knife.

A number of N.C. Cooperative Extension publications would be useful to you, especially one called "Carolina Lawns." Contact your local extension office.

Dear Plant Doctor: I have an insect that makes a large web with the resulting "worms" devouring the leaves on my pecan and persimmon trees. My well does not have enough pressure to force a spray to the top of the tree. I cut out what I can, but every year it is a bit worse. Any suggestions to get rid of these pests?—Stedman

in the N.C. House of Commons. He was born about 1745 and died at Gause Landing in 1801.

During its first 10 years the chapter has presented a JROTC medal at West Brunswick High School and Citizenship medals at Shallotte Middle and Waccamaw Elementary schools.

Elected to serve as delegates to the state meeting in Pinehurst were Mary Lou White, regent; Gwen Causey and Theodocia Musselwhite.

White announced that the April meeting will be a tour of Orton Plantation.

Anyone interested in joining the Daughters of the American Revolution should contact White at 754-4773.

Answer: Spraying large trees for insects or disease problems is nearly impossible these days because of environmental, legal and logistical problems. I suspect you have a problem with eastern or forest tent caterpillars.

Spraying the caterpillars directly with Orthene (acephate) works reasonably well when tents are near the ground.

The use of the bacteria *Bacillus thuringiensis* is very effective if used early in the battle against these critters. Commercial formulations of this product are called Bactospeine, Dipel and Thuricide. Solo and other brands of back pack sprayers offer spray extensions that will allow you to reach 10 or more feet into the tree canopy for spraying.

Treating tree insect pests offers a

great challenge. Good luck.

Send your gardening questions and comments to The Plant Doctor, P.O. Box 109, Bolivia, N.C. 28422.

Technical Crew Needed

Brunswick Little Theatre is seeking a vocal director/rehearsal pianist for its spring production of the musical comedy "Kismet."

The show will be produced in cooperation with Brunswick Community College, with performances scheduled April 15 and 16 in the Odell Williamson Auditorium.

Anyone interested in the vocal director position or any other technical position is asked to contact Stuart Callari at 457-6790 or Bob Hrdlicka at 278-4212.

Audition dates and times will be announced at a later date.

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