

ANR-941

Spot Anthracnose on Flowering Dogwood

Spot anthracnose, which is caused by the fungus *Elsinoe corni*, is a common disease of flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*). This disease is usually seen on dogwoods growing in partial to full sun; it is rarely a problem on trees in heavy shade. Dogwoods that flower first in the spring often suffer the heaviest spotting of the leaves and bracts. Generally, spot anthracnose is most damaging when the weather is cloudy and wet starting at bud-break through bloom.

Symptoms. Numerous small reddish purple spots on the white bracts and brown spots on the unfurling pink or red bracts are the earliest symptoms of spot anthracnose in the spring on flowering dogwood. Through the remainder of spring, a similar spotting on the new, expanding leaves, shoots, petioles, and fruit of dogwood occurs. Bracts and new leaves with numerous spots are often twisted or deformed. Heavily spotted bracts are often shed early. Although severe outbreaks of spot anthracnose will ruin the floral display of dogwood, this disease rarely reduces tree vigor.

Persistence And Transmission. As dogwoods begin to bloom, fungal spores are spread from tiny fruiting bodies on diseased shoots to flower and leaf buds by a combination of splashing water and wind. Extended periods of mild, wet, humid weather favor pathogen spread and colonization of bracts and juvenile leaves. In the landscape, disease spread generally is limited to early to mid-spring when the trees are putting on new leaves. Once the leaves mature, little development of spot anthracnose usually occurs.

Control. Spot anthracnose on flowering dogwood can be controlled by the following strategies:

- Plant early-flowering dogwood selections in partial to full shade to avoid disease outbreaks. You can plant later-flowering dogwoods in full sun because they have moderate to good resistance to spot anthracnose.
- Plant resistant cultivars. Nearly all native flowering dogwoods are susceptible to this disease. Some common cultivars of the flowering dogwood and their susceptibility to spot anthracnose are as follows:

Very Sensitive Plants. Barton White, Cloud 9, Cherokee Daybreak, Springtime, Rainbow, Pink Beauty, Ozark Spring, Cherokee Princess.

Somewhat Resistant Plants. Rubra, Welch's Junior Miss, Fragrant Cloud, Cherokee Brave, Red Beauty, Plena, First Lady.



Figure 1. Heavy spot anthracnose damage on Barton White flowering dogwood blooms.

Resistant. Welch's Bay Beauty, Cherokee Chief, Cherokee Sunset, Weaver's White.

- In late fall, collect and discard the leaves from around the base of spot anthracnose-damaged trees.
- For specimen or valuable flowering dogwoods in the landscape, apply a protective fungicide. Make the first application as the flower buds begin to swell. Make two to three additional applications every 7 to 14 days to fully protect the bracts and leaves from attack by the spot anthracnose fungus. Stop applying fungicides once the bracts fall.



Figure 2. Spot anthracnose on bract of flowering dogwood.

Table 1. Fungicides Labeled for the Control of Spot Anthracnose on Flowering Dogwood

Fungicide	Rate		Comments
	Per gallon	Per 100 gallons	
chlorothalonil			Begin fungicide applications as the flower buds start to break; repeat every 7 to 14 days until the bracts fall. Applications may be continued at 7- to 14-day intervals to protect the newly unfurling leaves on susceptible flowering dogwood.
Daconil Ultrex	—	1.38 lb.	
Garden Fungicide	2¼ t.	—	
myclobutanil			
Eagle 40EW	—	6 to 12 oz.	
Immunox	2 T.	—	
propiconazole			
Lawn Disease Control Systemic Fungicide	See label.	—	
1 T.			
thiophanate-methyl			
Halt 50W	2½ t.	—	
3336 50W	2½ t.	12 to 16 oz.	
3336 4.5F	—	10 to 20 fl. oz.	
tebuconazole			
Disease Control for Roses, Flowers, and Shrubs	1½ T.	—	



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Use chemicals only according to the directions on the label. Follow all directions, precautions, and restrictions that are listed.

Trade names are used only to give specific information. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System does not endorse or guarantee any product and does not recommend one product instead of another that might be similar.

For more information, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

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