



Horticulture Diagnostic Laboratory

Extension Education Center
423 Griffing Ave, Ste 100
Riverhead, NY 11901-3071
631-727-4126

www.ccesuffolk.org

Bayard Cutting Arboretum
Montauk Hwy
Great River, NY 11739
631-727-4126

**Cornell
Cooperative
Extension**
Suffolk County

Juniper Tip Blight

Phomopsis juniperovora, *Kabatina juniperi*, or *Sclerophoma pythiophila*

Introduction: Juniper tip blight, a progressive dying back of twigs and branches, can be caused by one of three fungi, *Phomopsis juniperovora*, *Kabatina juniperi*, or *Sclerophoma pythiophila*. These diseases are devastating to young trees and hedges; trees more than five years old are less seriously damaged. In addition to many species of juniper, arborvitae, white cedar, cypress and false-cypress are susceptible to *P. juniperovora*. *K. juniperi* infects juniper species primarily, but *S. pythiophila* infects needles of pines, Douglas-fir, and eastern larch, and twigs of juniper.

Symptoms: Blight symptoms first show up on recent growth of the lower branches. Dieback begins with shoot tips, and progresses back toward the main stem. Death of the entire plant may result where *P. juniperovora* and/or *K. juniperi* infections are involved. *S. pythiophila* infection often follows winter injury, but usually doesn't kill whole plants. Drought, freezing, dog urine, and transplant shock can cause similar dieback symptoms. However, if fungi are the cause, they will produce small black fruiting bodies (up to 0.5 mm in diameter) on recently killed leaves (Fig. 1) and stems and thus aid in diagnosis of juniper tip blights.

Disease Cycle. *P. juniperovora*, *K. juniperi* and *S. pythiophila* overwinter in killed twigs and bark on the shrub or on the ground. Fruiting bodies of the fungi develop in the spring and, during wet weather, release many spores capable of causing new infections. *P. juniperovora* attacks young succulent shoot tips and may also enter the plant through wounds. Infections can occur throughout the summer. *K. juniperi* attacks one year old growth in the fall, with symptoms showing up in early spring. The fungus may enter the plant through wounds, as well. If wet weather prevails, these fungi will spread throughout the shrub in the course of a few years or less. *S. pythiophila* attacks shoots weakened by winter injury.

Management Strategies: Infected twigs and branches should be pruned about two inches into live wood and destroyed. Prune only when plants are dry, and sterilize tools between each cut by swabbing them with a solution containing 1 part rubbing alcohol and 3 parts water or use a solution of 1 part household bleach to 9 parts water.

Plants should be spaced so as to provide good ventilation. This will reduce high moisture conditions which favor these diseases. Water in early morning only. Wounding during transplanting and during cultivation should be avoided for similar reasons. Do not over-fertilize. Prune out diseased branch tips during dry weather but avoid excessive shearing.

Contact you local Cooperative Extension for specific fungicide recommendations for homeowner use. Additional products may be available for commercial use. Commercial applicators should refer to the appropriate commercial pest management guidelines, or contact their local Cooperative Extension Office for more information on currently registered products.



Figure 1. Close up view of pycnidia of the fungus *Kabatina* (H.G.I.C., University of Maryland)

Disease-Resistant Junipers. Many species of *Juniperus* have been reported to be resistant to at least one of the common diseases. However, because all three are ubiquitous, resistance to at least two of the three is advisable. Listed in the chart on the following page are taxa with such resistance.

Disease-Resistant Junipers

Species/Variety	Resistant To		
	<i>Phomopsis</i>	<i>Kabatina</i>	Rusts
<i>J. chinensis</i>			
'Femina'	X		X
'Hetzii'		X	X
'Iowa'	X		
'Keteleeri'	X	X	X
'Pfitzeriana'	X	X	X
Sargentii	X	X	X
sarg.-glauca	X	X	
<i>J. communis</i>			
'Depressa'	X		X
'Hibernica'		X	X
'Saxatalis'	X		X
<i>J. sabina</i>			
'Broadmoor'	X		X
'Knap Hill'	X		X
'Skandia'	X		X
<i>J. virginianae</i>			
'Tripartita'	X		X

Disease-Resistant Juniper Chart obtained from: 2017 PMG for Commercial Production and Maintenance of Trees and Shrubs, A Cornell Cooperative Extension Publication.

Reprinted from: *Juniper Tip Blight Phomopsis juniperovora, Kabatina juniperi, or Sclerophoma pythiophila*, The Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. Updated, SLJ, 3/09

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Bureau of Pest Management maintains a web site with a searchable database for pesticide products currently registered in New York State. Individuals who have Internet access can locate currently registered at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/nyspad/products?0>.

This publication contains pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly and human errors are still possible. Some materials mentioned may no longer be available, and some uses may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension Specialist or your regional NYSDEC office. Read the label before applying any pesticide.

TK: 5/2009 AR: 11/2025