

Hypoxyton Canker of Oaks

Hypoxyton atropunctatum

Hypoxyton mediterraneum

Hypoxyton punctulatum

SYMPTOMS: Yellowing or wilting of oak leaves may signal the onset of Hypoxyton but these symptoms are typical of many stress factors, not necessarily caused by this disease.

Hypoxyton can be identified by the dark-colored, crusty fungus tissue on the dead cankered area. Large pieces of bark may slough off, exposing the fungus beneath. Bark may slough off in patches but, characteristically, in strips up to several meters long. Spore masses may vary in color from tan to bluish-gray to black. It is these



spores, transported by wind, which cause new infections on wounded or stressed trees.

Willow and water oak appear to be most susceptible, followed by red oak and occasionally post and live oak. Although found throughout North America, this disease is primarily a problem in the Southern United States.

CAUSE: This fungus is noted for attacking trees which are already in a stressed or declining condition. Hypoxyton infected trees have been found where stress has resulted from construction damage, excessive fill, lawn mower damage, or storm damage. Drought conditions or excessively wet soils also predispose susceptible trees to the disease.

SOLUTION: Keep the trees as vigorous as possible by properly fertilizing. Prune out any branches showing early infection since this reduces the amount of spore inoculum. If grade changes or construction are anticipated, contact a qualified arborist for recommendations. Insect populations should be managed to reduce stresses resulting from insect feeding.