

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
TO THE INDEPENDENT COLLIERVILLE

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Bacterial Leaf Scorch in Trees  
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The fall of the year is fast approaching. First frost is just around the corner. Many yards and landscapes are showing signs of stress from lack of water and high temperatures. It is to be expected that plants start to develop spots and the leaves to start turning color. We are not in a tropical zone and trees are not supposed to be green all year (unless they are evergreen).

There are a couple of problems that we are receiving calls on at the Extension Office that are not due to the natural preparation for winter dormancy. Bacterial leaf scorch is an infectious disease caused by a bacterium. The bacterium is transmitted by insects and colonizes in the plant clogging up the water transportation system. Trees that are infected have browning from the outer margin bordered by a pale halo band that separates the dead tissue from the green tissue. This infection can cause reduction in growth and die back. Trees commonly affected by bacterial leaf scorch include maples, sycamore, mulberry, oaks and sweetgum.

There is no cure for infected trees. There is also no effective preventative treatment and infected trees will gradually die over several years. Prune out dead wood. Mulching and irrigating during periods of drought will reduce moisture stress and delay scorch development, prolonging the life of the tree.

Another problem that is currently causing Burning Bushes (*Euonymus alatus*) to prematurely turn color and defoliate. The culprit is a mite that loves hot weather. This year the weather has been perfect for populations of mites to get out of control. To check for mites on your burning bush, take a white piece of paper and hold under a branch while you shake the branch. Plant-feeding mites will produce a green streak when smashed compared to a red streak for beneficial mites. If you get a green streak spray your shrubs with insecticidal soap or horticultural oil. Follow the label for use and interval spraying. Repeat as often as monitoring shows mites.

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