

## Leyland Cypress Problems.

Oh my goodness Leyland Cypress trees are losing needles and looking not so good all over Tennessee. What is going on?? Well, this is what we know at UT Extension.

First, a lot of the damage is simply environmental, it is not a disease or insect. We are seeing the results of stress from a harsh winter causing sporadic limb die off. Also these cypresses grow to large mature trees 60+ feet tall and 20+ feet spread. They are often planted on eight feet centers causing lots of competition and shading. When you see needles that have browned out toward the interior of the plant or in areas that receive shading, the tree is reacting to these environmental stresses.

Second, we are seeing cankers on the limbs and trunks. Here again brought on by weather stress usually drought conditions. The main canker disease is called seiridium canker. There is no control for this disease other than to prune out the infected plant part. Pruning out infected parts of the tree and sterilizing pruners with alcohol or Lysol after every cut is a good idea. This disease causes death of needles past the canker. The canker appears as a few dark red or brown spots which some fluid (tree sap). If you see this just prune a few inches below the canker.

Third, some disagreement exists about the needle blight. We are seeing what we think to be a needle blight affecting some Leyland Cypress trees. We are seeing individual needles turning brown to tan on the tips of limbs. The symptoms may progress up the trunk steadily moving from bottom to top. If it is needle blight, three sprays 10 days apart with a fungicide with the active ingredient (a.i.) chlorothalonil is the prescribed treatment.

Leyland Cypress trees are very susceptible to many diseases and insects. Canker diseases and feeding by bagworms are perennial problems we see here in Tennessee. We are guilty of creating many of the stresses we see by planting them too close together and too close to other plants or structures that shade them. Avoiding moisture stress is essential to lessen the occurrence of the canker diseases they are susceptible to. Water is extremely important for these trees and will need to be provided for as long as you have this plant, a long term commitment for the Leyland cypress owner. They should be watered during any period of dry weather and should receive at least 1" of water per week. Make sure you place the water at the base and do not spray water on the foliage with sprinklers. These are large trees typically growing 60' – 70' in height and with a 20'+ spread. Plant them no closer than 12 feet apart. Air flow is very important and putting them closer will cause lots of problems and shading which causes the lower limbs to die out.