

PEST MANAGEMENT: DIAGNOSTIC OF PLANT PROBLEMS



creativeROOTS
LANDSCAPING

Insects are visible with their damage

If insects are found next to plant damage, the insects are likely the cause. Insects may also be found on plants under stress for lack of food or water.



Diseases are visible by symptoms

Most diseases are caused by fungi, which are very small and spread by spores. Many fungi diseases cause leaf spots, somewhat circular with a coloured halo.



Nutrient deficiencies cause leaf discoloration

Plants show an off-colour, light green or yellow, but veins remain dark green. Each nutrient comes with distinctive symptoms on new growth or older growth.



Leaf browning caused by water stress

Many problems start with improper watering, either too much or too little. Too little irrigation will cause the leaves to turn brown starting at the edge.



Look for “normal” and “not normal”

What should the plant look like? Is the appearance typical for the plant?
If it is not normal, is it caused by an insect, a disease or the environment?



Look for patterns

If the whole plant is affected, the cause is likely abiotic (the environment).
If some leaves are affected, but not all, the cause is likely biotic (a disease).



Look at the soil

The problem seen on the foliage may have started with a problem in the soil.
Was it planted too deep? Is the soil too dry or too wet?



Review the history at the site

The plant problem may be caused by something that was done near the plant.
Was a product sprayed recently? Was there construction in the past year?



Look for secondary conditions

A plant under stress for a long time becomes susceptible to other diseases. Nectria canker is seen by orange spots and is an indication of another problem.

