

Problem: Kabatina Tip Blight of Juniper - *Kabatina juniperi*



Host Plants: Upright and spreader juniper species.

Description: Kabatina tip blight is a common problem in windbreak and ornamental plantings of junipers. This disease results in foliar blighting and a tip dieback. Damage to young nursery stock, transplants and certain juniper varieties and species can be extensive, but most established junipers in the landscape are seldom killed. Nevertheless, Kabatina tip blight may reduce the overall quality of the planting.

Symptoms of **Kabatina tip blight**, caused by the fungus *Kabatina juniperi*, appear in February and March and well before those of *Phomopsis* tip blight. The terminal 2 to 6 inches of diseased branches throughout the juniper first turn dull green, then red or yellow. Small ash gray to silver lesions dotted with small black fruit bodies of the fungus may be visible at the base of the discolored tissue. The brown, desiccated foliage eventually drops from the tree in late May or June. Foliar blighting occurs only in early spring; it does not continue through the summer. Blighting is also restricted to the branch tips and does not cause extensive branch dieback or tree death.

The primary infection period for the *Kabatina* fungus is thought to be in autumn even though visible symptoms are not apparent until late winter or early spring. Infection

often is associated with small wounds on branch tips caused by insect feeding or mechanical damage.

Recommendations: Several practices can help reduce the severity of Kabatina tip blight. When purchasing new plants, select those that show disease resistance. Space new plantings to allow for good air circulation. Avoid wounding plants, especially in spring and fall. Maintain adequate fertility but do not over fertilize. Water plants in early morning so the foliage will dry as the day progresses. Avoid night watering. Prune out diseased branch tips during dry summer weather and destroy them. However, avoid excessive pruning or shearing. Chemical control of tip blight normally is not necessary in established landscape or windbreak plantings. Kabatina tip blight infections occur in the fall and there currently are no fungicides labeled for control of this disease.

References:

1. [Tree & Shrub Problems in Kansas](#). K-State Research and Extension, Publication MF3132

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