



## Question of the Week

**Q: I just noticed that the ends of many branches on my Scotch pine have died and are curling over. There is sappy stuff on some of the branches. What can I do?**

**A:** What you describe sounds like the fungal disease Diplodia tip blight (also called Sphaeropsis shoot blight). It affects Austrian, mugo, Scotch, and red pines, with Austrian pine the most severely affected. You often see it on older, larger trees. Diplodia tip blight of pines is a relatively easy disease to diagnose. The fungus kills the expanding “candle,” the current year's growth tip. The candle curls and turns brown, giving the tree brown tips, particularly in the lower branches on older trees.

Diplodia remains on the branch all winter. The most susceptible trees are those with reduced vigor, e.g., those stressed by drought, snow damage, or insect activity. To prevent this disease, don't plant trees in unfavorable locations, on poor soils, or in densely shaded areas. Keep infected trees vigorous by fertilizing and by watering during the short droughts of midsummer.

One to three applications of an effective fungicide will control Diplodia tip blight. The fungicide application must be timed precisely to coincide with swelling and opening of the buds, usually late April and early May. When candles begin expanding (usually in mid-May), it's too late. Fungicides labeled for controlling Diplodia include Bordeaux mixture, copper materials, propiconazole (Banner Maxx), and thiophanate methyl. Follow label directions precisely when applying any pesticide.

Got questions? UNH Cooperative Extension's Family, Home & Garden Education Center Info Line offers practical help finding answers for your lawn and garden questions. Call toll free at 1-877-398-4769, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., or e-mail us at [fhgc@ceunh.unh.edu](mailto:fhgc@ceunh.unh.edu)