

UNH Cooperative Extension Info Line Question of the Week

Needle-Browning on White Pines

Q. A lot of needles on the white pine trees behind our house have turned brown and are falling off. What's going on?

A. Wherever white pine grows in New Hampshire, people report seeing yellow and brown needles dropping. White-pine needles are supposed to turn brown and fall off, but in the fall, not in June. The cause: Last year's rainy spring. Above-average rainfall in May and June encouraged fungal infections on interior needles as they were developing new shoots. While the damage may look serious, your trees aren't dying. Unless trees suffer years of damage, there shouldn't be lasting effects on tree health.

In fact, your pine trees should begin looking better as soon as the injured needles fall and this year's new growth expands. "This year's new needles are green and generally healthy," says Cheryl Smith, UNH Cooperative Extension's plant health specialist. She says people may see more dead lower branches than usual or further weakening of trees already unhealthy from other stresses.

Don't call to report needle-browning on white pines, but do contact the N.H. Division of Forests and Lands at 464-3016 to report other tree health problems. Call the Cooperative Extension Info Line at 1-877-398-4769 for information about keeping your yard trees healthy.

Got questions? UNH Cooperative Extension Education Center's 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 answers@unh.edu.