

Oak Leaf Blister

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Symptoms: Initially pale green, blisterlike, circular, sunken or raised areas 1/16 to 1/2 inch in diameter appear on the leaves in early spring. These blisters turn brown and necrotic later in the season. Severe infections cause distortion of the newly expanding leaves. Usually the top side of the leaf will have raised brown areas, whereas the corresponding bottom side of the leaf will have sunken areas. In some instances you may have the reverse of this.

What causes it: The fungus *Taphrina caerulescens*

Host plants: Many oak (*Quercus*) species.

Members of the red/black oak subgroup are typically most susceptible.

Weather patterns that promote disease development: Cool, wet, spring weather is required for infection to occur on young leaves. If these conditions prevail, severe infection can occur. If weather conditions are not favorable for infection shortly after bud break then symptoms will be mild. Rake up the leaves to reduce the number of infecting spores that could cause infection the following year.

Management: The disease does not harm the tree, it is a surface blemish. It is best to leave the tree alone. Fungicide treatment may be considered for high value trees if a wet spring is predicted and if there was a severe infection the previous year. A single fungicide application in late winter just before the buds begin to swell will manage this disease, but this is rarely warranted. Fungicides applied after bud break are much less effective. Several pesticide products containing the active ingredient chlorothalonil may be registered for this use. **WARNING:** As with all pesticides, all product labeling regarding application rates, concentrations, safety precautions, etc. must be followed precisely. This is a federal law.

Homeowners are strongly discouraged from apply pesticides to trees because of concerns of drift and applicator contamination. Pesticide application to trees is best done by a pest control service.

Member-Pinellas Partnership for a Drug Free Workplace

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