

WETWOOD

Wetwood is a bacterial infection that is common in trees such as elms, willow, cottonwoods, maples, and aspen. These species of trees growing on sites with wet and/or poorly drained soils are more likely to obtain wetwood.

SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS



Wetwood, a water-soaked, sap oozing, condition of wood can be found in wounds, cracks, branch crotches, and mainly during the growing season. The infected area of the tree is usually discolored, gives off a rancid or sour odor, and there is usually a secretion or slime fluxing from the affected areas. Foliage of the affected limbs is often prematurely yellow, scorched, and wilted. Wilting may cause die back of various branches and may affect the entire crown area if left untreated over several years. Wounds infected with wetwood do not heal; therefore, lengthens susceptibility to decay fungi. Wetwood may contribute to the general decline of the tree, especially of old trees and trees of low vigor.

Bacteria that affect the heartwood cause Wetwood. This infection causes abnormally high sap pressure. This pressure is produced by a bacterial fermentation and forces the fermented sap out cracks or other wounds. The wetwood is especially evident when the tree is growing rapidly. The problem may continue for many years.



CONTROL

Wetwood can be controlled by an injection of Oxytetracycline by a certified arborist. The injection should be followed up by fertilization to aid in the recovery of the tree. Wetwood should be treated, as the condition of the tree requires.

Should the tree show a positive response or stabilization after the first or second antibiotic application, the tree should be put on an annual fertilization program to encourage overall tree health.



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