



Diplodia Shoot and Tip Blight

Diplodia pinea



HOST: PONDEROSA PINE

Ornamental pines (Scots, Austrian pine) are also susceptible.

DAMAGE: BRANCH DIEBACK

Diplodia rarely causes mortality but can kill individual branches.

Ecology

Diplodia shoot and tip blight is a fungus that causes lesions on branches of ponderosa pine. Diplodia produces spores at the end of the summer that are spread by rain splash, insects, and wind. These spores infect young shoots the following spring, if conditions are sufficiently temperate and moist. New needles will appear stunted, short and brown. Infections may be latent in trees, and erupt when triggered by drought or hail injury.



Diplodia-infected trees

Identification

- Damage begins in the lower crown and progresses upwards
- Dead branches in crown appear as orange spots of foliage
- Grey needles remain attached to branch after death
- Resinous lesions on branches
- Small black spore-producing structures ("pycnidia") on needles and cone scales, often appearing as minute black pustules



Dying needles



Pycnidia on cone

Management

- Promote tree vigor to keep latent infections asymptomatic
- Avoid pruning during wet, temperate conditions
- Thin stands to reduce competition for water
- Do not fertilize susceptible trees; excess fertilizer can exacerbate infections
- Infections can reside in a shoot without symptoms for years; therefore, removing infected material does not control disease