



Arizona Forest Health Alert

IRRIGATING YOUR ALEPPO PINE DURING THE SUMMER MAY PROTECT IT FROM DISEASE



June 2021

Excessive summer heat is creating stressful conditions for mature Aleppo pines. Deep-watering through the hot summer months may help these high-value trees.

The Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management is reporting that Aleppo Pine Blight disease is affecting mature Aleppo pines in low elevation desert communities in Arizona. The main cause of the disease is unknown and a monitoring program is underway.

WHY DO WE CARE?

Mature Aleppo pine trees provide valuable shade in the hot summer months. Native to the Mediterranean region, Aleppo pines (*Pinus halepensis*) can tolerate the heat and alkaline soils of Arizona deserts, however, increasing temperatures and decreasing precipitation are intensifying symptoms of stress from Aleppo Pine Blight disease.

SIGNS OF ACTIVITY

Signs of damage usually occur in the upper branches of the tree starting in November through February or March. The needles typically turn grey-green to reddish-brown and eventually die. Sun-exposed sides of the tree are generally the most affected.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Fortunately, with care, this disease is usually not fatal to the tree. With the return of seasonal moisture, moderately affected trees should recover and experience normal refoliation in the spring. Severely affected trees may experience blight over several seasons, making it more difficult for the tree to recover.

Homeowners can take the following precautions starting in the spring:

1. Monthly deep watering at the dripline (outer edge of tree branches) during hot and dry spring and summer months (do not overwater).
2. To retain soil moisture, mulch 2-4 inches deep out to the dripline, taking care to prevent mulch from being on the trunk and root flare.
3. Consult with a certified forester or arborist.

For more information on Aleppo Pine Blight go to <https://cals.arizona.edu/maricopa/garden/html/t-tips/cultural/aleppo.htm>. For more information on how to care for your trees during a drought go to <https://blog.davey.com/2016/07/what-is-deep-root-watering-of-a-tree/>.

For further information about this disease or other forest health concerns, contact Aly McAlexander, Forest Health Specialist, at (602) 771-1415 or amcalexander@dffm.az.gov.



This severely-infected tree recovered the following year.

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Funding provided by the USDA Forest Service.