



FYN Garden Q & A Series

Thomas Becker
Extension Agent, Florida
Yards & Neighborhoods



FYN Topic: Cucumber Mosaic Virus

Question: What might have caused a beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) shrub to suddenly look stunted and the leaves distorted. Last year this native looked PERFECT! Jean H.

Answer: Your shrub was probably fed upon by a persistent pest, an aphid, which transmitted into your shrub a deadly virus, called Cucumber Mosaic Virus (CMV). Chances are the aphid flew in and gathered in large numbers on newly emerging plant growth. An example, the green peach aphid, feeds by sucking sap out of the leaves while at the same time transmitting CMV into an otherwise healthy plant. CMV infects many types of fruits, vegetables and herbaceous ornamentals. Resistance is futile. CMV damage is difficult at best to detect and stop before the aphids get there. Symptoms on beautyberry leaves include distorted, discolored and stippled leaves followed by dying branches from the base. Prune out dead or dying stems but expect more symptoms to follow all summer long. Best solution to prevent other landscape plants being infected nearby is removing and destroying. Avoid the temptation to propagate or grow new plants from its seeds. CMV is transmitted into the seeds and CMV infects these seedlings. Purchase a virus-free nursery-raised replacement. Other aids in the battle to defeat CMV: Keep weeds surrounding the yard from going to seed. Disinfect garden tools after pruning or propagating. Brush tools clean of dirt and debris. Use household bleach (ex: Clorox) of 25% solution (1 part bleach + 3 parts water).

Useful Links

<http://www.floridayards.org>
<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>
<http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>
<http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>



CMV discolored and stippled cucumber leaf.
Google image

Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 239-533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. or by emailing Extgardener@leegov.com. Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

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