



Topic: Viburnum Awabuki and Downey Mildew

Question: I have a small landscape company and I have been noticing a major leaf drop in some Viburnum Awabuki. They get a black spot with a ring around the spot, and then drop. The new leaves are coming out mutated with a curl. Do you know what this is? I can't seem to stop it with spray, systemic (aloft) or hard pruning. HELP?

- Ben, Bonita Springs

Answer: The problem is Downey mildew a disease somewhat common to Awabuki at this time of year. Downey Mildew is a cool weather disease and will disappear of its own accord by late March. However, the disease causes severe leaf drop. Be sure to collect and dispose of fallen leaves. Downey Mildew is difficult to control even with applications of a recommended fungicide. What's more, disease infected leaves are soon replaced by new leaves leading to the plant's secondary problem. As new leaves emerge, they are fed upon by sap sucking aphids. The insects often transmit a toxin that causes deformity of new leaves. Pruning only exacerbates the problem as cut tissue sprouts new leaves, thus providing new food source for the aphids. You can combine a recommended fungicide plus an insecticide in an attempt to manage both problems. You can mix the chemicals if the labels do not prohibit it. If left untreated, both problems will disappear but that might test the patience of your customer.



Useful Links

[Downey Mildew on Awabuki](#)
[Stephen's Webpage](#)

Stephen Brown is a horticulture agent with the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the horticulture desk at 533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by sending an email to brownsh@leegov.com.