

BEECH LEAF DISEASE

in West Virginia

What is Beech Leaf Disease?

It is a new disease that affects American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*). Beech leaf disease (BLD) has also been found on other species of beech such as the European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*).

It has been shown that BLD is caused by a recently recognized nematode. This nematode is a subspecies of the anguinid nematode (*Litylenchus crenatae mccannii*).



Gavin McGee

BLD on American beech leaves



Kristen Carrington

American beech dieback due to BLD



West Virginia DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER, KENT A. LEONHARDT

What does BLD look like?

- Symptoms present as darker green, discolored stripes between the veins of beech leaves.
- The leaves will appear crinkled/deformed as symptoms progress.

What damage does it cause?

- BLD causes deformed leaves and aborted buds.
- Mortality of beech has been observed within a few years. In general, smaller sized beech die more quickly than mature beech trees.

Where is BLD in WV?

- BLD has been detected in West Virginia's northern and eastern panhandle as well as Monongalia County. The disease appears to spread quite fast.
- Exact mechanisms of spread are not yet fully confirmed but possible means of distribution include water and wind.

What is the easiest way for a homeowner to prevent beech mortality?

- Application of potassium phosphite to the trunk and root flare of beech trees has shown significant reduction in BLD symptoms.
- Treatments should be made twice per year between May and August but one month apart.
- Potassium phosphite should be mixed with an equal amount of water and the bark should be evenly wetted to a height of 4.5 feet above the ground.
- Small beech trees should be treated to a height off the ground equal to their diameter. For example, a tree with a diameter of 1 inch should have the trunk wetted to a height of 1 foot.
- There are many potassium phosphite products on the market. An online search should yield products and vendors.



Contact Us!



For more information or questions
call us at 304-558-2212

Facts to Consider

- If you have a mature beech tree near your home, depending on the cost of removal once it succumbs to BLD, it may be more cost effective to simply treat the tree and retain it.
- It is possible that it could take up to 3 years of treatments to fully protect your beech tree. Given the spread of BLD, it may be advisable to begin treatments so that when the disease moves into your area, your tree is already protected.