

Forest Disease Management Notes

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service
Pacific Northwest
Region



Larch Needle Blight

Larch needle blight is caused by the fungus *Hypodermella laricis*. This disease appears frequently throughout Pacific Northwest larch stands. Trees in forest stands generally do not experience serious damage even though the disease may appear to be spectacular.

Hosts: Western larch.

Recognition: Needles are reddish-brown over their entire length as if scorched by fire; damage generally occurs in June; typically, all needles on a spur are affected.

Small, black fruit bodies (hysterothecia) are formed on dead needles; fruit bodies often merge to form narrow rows.

Disease Spread: Airborne spores infect larch needles in early spring, immediately after budbreak; mature needles are immune; 6 weeks after infection, needles turn red and die; later in summer, hysterothecia form on dead needles; infected needles are retained for 1 year or more; spores develop in hysterothecia in autumn; following spring rains, hysterothecia rupture and release spores; spores on the old needles can also be carried by rain splash to newly emerging foliage to cause infection; infected crowns generally refoliate the following season; repeated infection may cause growth loss and, rarely, mortality.

Management: None warranted in forest stands; in nurseries or on ornamentals, benomyl or maneb applied repeatedly during infection period (1 week before to 2-3 weeks after budbreak) should prevent disease.

May be Confused With: *Meria laricis*, larch casebearer.

H. laricis hysterothecia on
western larch



Larch needles killed by
H. laricis