

Forest Disease Management Notes

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service
Pacific Northwest
Region



Pecky Rot

Pecky rot, caused by the fungus *Polyporus amarus*, is the most important stem decay of incense-cedar in Oregon. Conks indicate extensive decay columns.

Hosts: Incense-cedar.

Recognition: Early rot appears as a **yellowish brown** discoloration in the heartwood; advanced decay consists of round-ended pockets (1/2-12 in. long) containing dark brown, crumbly, dry rot with numerous longitudinal shrinkage cracks; as decay intensifies, pockets become more numerous and sometimes nearly coalesce; rot is confined to the heartwood and usually is not prominent in the butt of the tree; shot-hole cups (depressions in the bark caused by woodpeckers searching for insects at a former conk location) are common indicators of infection.

Annual conks form on the bark above open knots in late summer or fall; conks are hoofshaped, 4 to 9 in. wide, and buff to bright yellow in color; when fresh, conks are soft and moist, becoming firm and dry with age; numerous small angular pore openings cover the underside of the conks; conks are destroyed rapidly by insects.

Disease Spread: Airborne spores infect, chiefly through open fire wounds, large open knots, and broken branch stubs; trees are particularly susceptible when growing in ravines or other locations favoring the retention of surface moisture on exposed heartwood; mainly a problem of older trees; trees exhibiting either conks or shot-hole cups are almost certain to be unmerchantable as the result of extensive decay.

Management: Lower rotation age for incense-cedar; fell trees with conks and shot-hole cups; avoid injuring trees. Trees with conks should be removed in recreation areas.

May be Confused With: Nothing.

Polyporus amarus conk



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