

# Forest Disease Management Notes

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest Service  
Pacific Northwest  
Region



## Larch Dwarf Mistletoe

Larch dwarf mistletoe, *Arceuthobium laricis* is present in 47% of the western larch type in the Pacific Northwest. Infected trees suffer growth loss, wood quality reduction, and death.

**Hosts:** Principal- western larch; Secondary- subalpine larch, subalpine fir, mountain hemlock, lodgepole pine. Occasional- Engelmann spruce, whitebark, and ponderosa pine.

**Recognition:** Leafless, dark-purple dwarf mistletoe shoots (1.5-4 in. long) on infected branches. Stem and branch swellings, witches'-brooms, "spike-top" trees. Stem burls occur where infected branches break off.

**Disease Spread:** Seeds are sticky and forcibly discharged from fruits in the fall; seeds germinate in spring, infection occurs through thin bark on stems and branches. Spread is most rapid in multi-storied stands; infections cause branch or stem swelling and eventual death of member; death of host results in death of parasite.

**Management:** Clearcut severely infested stands, remove infested overstory if a manageable susceptible understory is present; remove severely infected trees in lightly infested stands; favor non-hosts in mixed stands; in recreation areas, trees with large, dead tops should be treated.

**May be Confused With:** No other disease resembles larch dwarf mistletoe.

Larch dwarf mistletoe plants



Larch dying from  
dwarf mistletoe