

# Forest Disease Management Notes

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest Service  
Pacific Northwest  
Region



## True Mistletoes

True mistletoes in the Pacific Northwest are all members of the genus *Phoradendron*. The most conspicuous true mistletoes, infect oaks in western and southern Oregon. Severe infestations can cause growth loss, branch dieback, and tree killing.

**Hosts:** Hardwoods (oaks), junipers, incense cedar.

**Recognition:** Infection can cause excessive twig formation (witches'-brooms); occasionally branch death. Conspicuous leafy, perennial evergreen tufts of mistletoe shoots; stems and leaves are green but may have a yellow or brown cast; seeds are pearly white.

**Disease Spread:** Seeds are borne in white or red fruits and are distributed by birds and other animals; unlike dwarf mistletoes, the seeds are not forcibly discharged; infection occurs on young, thin bark of host; plants make most of their own food by photosynthesis but obtain water and some nutrition from their hosts; generally causes little damage except in cases where mistletoe plants are extremely numerous.

**Management:** Usually not warranted; remove heavily infected individuals. Prune severely infected branches. Harvest plants for Christmas smooching.

**May be Confused With:** Dwarf mistletoes, incense cedar rust



True mistletoe on oak

True mistletoe on juniper



True mistletoe on incense cedar

