



# WALNUT NOTES

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## **Mycosphaerella Leaf Spot**

Mycosphaerella leaf spot causes premature defoliation of black walnut, which slows the trees' growth and reduces the quantity or quality of nut crops (fig. 1). This disease, caused by a fungus, has been found in North Carolina, Georgia, Illinois, and Iowa. It is especially common in young black walnut plantations. Wet weather in which the foliage is covered with moisture for prolonged periods makes the disease more severe.

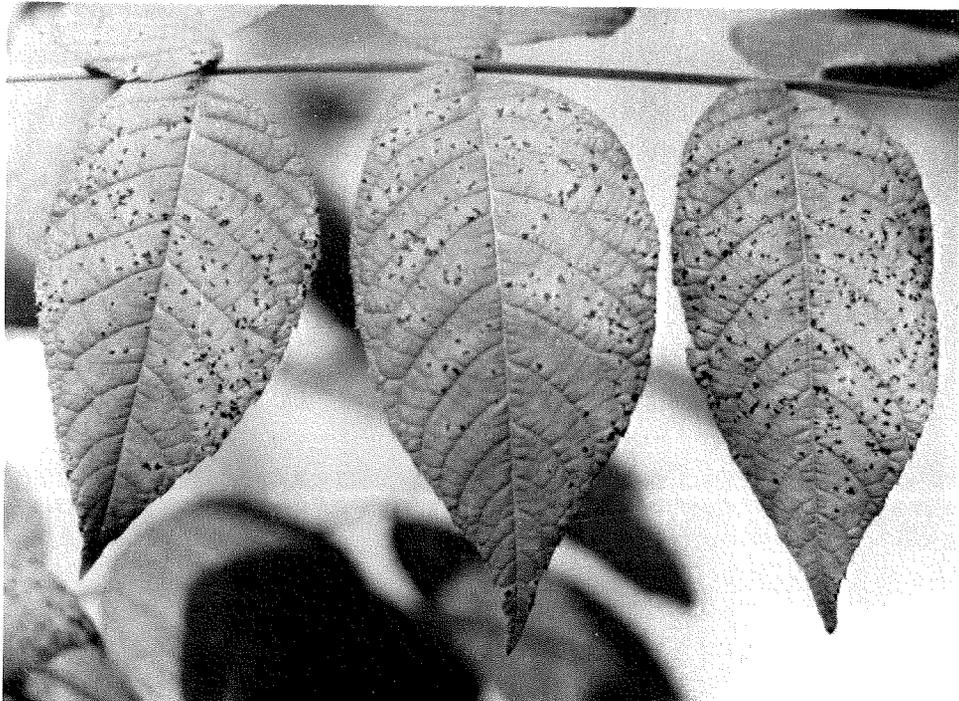


Figure 1.-Typical Mycosphaerella leaf spot lesions.

Small, angular-sided dark spots up to 4 mm in diameter first appear on leaf blades in spring as the leaves approach their mature size. As the season progresses, more spots appear-often concentrated at the tips or along the major veins of the leaflets. Eventually, affected leaflets drop prematurely.

**Control**

Control may not be required where trees are being grown exclusively for timber and where disease does not appear each year. But control measures may be needed where trees are being grown for a nut crop or where the site has a history of annual *Mycosphaerella* epidemics.

Cultural.-Interplant walnut with autumn-olive or Russian olive. The olives interfere with spread of the disease spores from tree to tree, and olive leaves cover fallen infected walnut leaves on the ground.

Chemical.-Apply the fungicide benomyl as a foliar spray, beginning in mid-June. Repeat every 3 weeks. At least four applications may be required for control.

**Reference**

Kessler, Kenneth J., Jr.; Swanson, Linda B. H. 1985. How to identify and control black walnut *Mycosphaerella* leaf spot. HT-65. St. Paul, MN: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, North Central Forest Experiment Station. 6 p.

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