Ray Smith & Associates, Inc.
Tree and Plant Health Care
Landscape Design
& Installation

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Beech Leaf Disease (BLD)

A serious concern for East End Landscapes and Northeastern Forests

First discovered in forested areas of Ohio in 2012, this disease affects the buds and leaves of Beech trees. Initially thought to only affect American Beech, reports have been observed on Japanese, Fastigiate and European Beech trees in recent years, as well. The suspected cause is a foliar nematode that overwinters in the buds and infects the leaf as it emerges in the spring. It is still unclear how the nematode is infecting individual stands of Beech trees in the Northeast, or what vector could be carrying the nematode to the Beech trees. Some theories have risen regarding environmental factors like weather and winds, to biological vectors like Mites. Symptoms include dark green stripes between veins, easily seen when held up to a light source, leathery to the touch and leaf curling in later stages. In progressive stages of the disease, leaves may not emerge from the buds. As a result of infected leaves and lack of foliage of the crown, trees will begin to decline with cases of young trees dead within 3 years and mature trees within 8 years. Research is under way to find a treatment for the trees and disease, however as of August 2021; there is no known treatment for the disease or nematode. In early data, some injectable products have shown signs of decline of nematode populations. Any and all treatments would be experimental at this time.

For more information from local governments on this disease, please click links below:

https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/120589.html

https://www.fs.usda.gov/treesearch/pubs/59915

https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/fb6bdcaf/files/uploaded/beechdisease.pdf

If you have a Beech tree in your landscape, please contact your local Ray Smith and Associates Arborist to inspect your tree for BLD and to discuss potential options for managing this disease.

Sincerely,

Chris Conway – Plant Health Care Manager

8/5/2021