

PRUNING CONTINUED...

number of reasons. It was thought they would act as a physical barrier over the exposed wood, preventing fungal spores from entering. However, various authorities have now suggested that fungal spores may infect the wood before the dressing can be applied and, in the long term, entrances for fungal spores can still appear as the sealant cracks or insects bore holes through it.

So, long-term protection is practically impossible at present. Applying wound sealants with fungicidal properties to chemically destroy decay fungi is also under question. A fungicide that effectively controls fungi already infecting the wound before application and that also gives long-term protection against decay fungi would be required. It appears that none of the wound sealants presently available can effectively carry out both tasks. Certain wound sealants have been found to be beneficial in improving callusing around pruning wounds. This is thought to occur because of the protection the dressing gives exposed cambium, the cells that generate callus growth, from drying out.

Some people find the wounds caused by branch removal unsightly and wound dressings do improve the appearance of ornamental trees. I find the idea of dressing wounds of trees on golf courses for cosmetic purposes only impractical and expensive. So, it would appear that, at present, the dressing of pruning wounds on amenity and forest trees on golf courses is not a practical proposition when aiming to protect the tree and this method of not treating wounds, allied to the pruning method explained, is the most helpful type of branch removal.

Of course, it should be remembered that good formative pruning of trees while they are young can prevent problems when they mature. This means looking at your trees, trying to identify branches or habits of growth that may cause subsequent difficulties and dealing with them accordingly.

A branch removed when a tree is younger causes a smaller wound, which heals quicker, than one that results from waiting for a tree to mature and then removing it.

Apprentice Corner

ANTHRACNOSE (*Colletotrichum graminicola*)

Although this disease usually affects Poa annua, it can also occur on various species of grass. It is easily recognised because the fungus produces a black lesion at the base of the sheath, which can be seen by removing the older sheaths. The whole root base turns black and the growing point is often destroyed. Shoots affected turn yellow with the youngest leaf turning red. However, the presence of the black lesion is particularly characteristic as the disease is often seen when the soil is very compacted. It follows that regular aeration should be carried out to prevent the build up of excessive compaction. Low fertiliser application is also associated with the incidence of this disease.

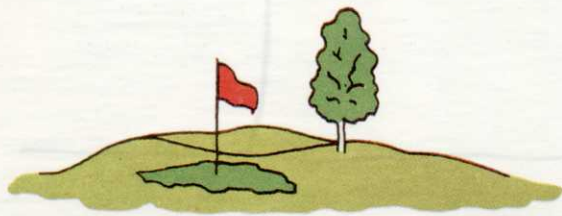


Anthracnose.

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