CONTROL FOR AZALEA LEAF DISEASES

Proper applications of fungicidal chemicals can control azalea leaf gall and azalea leaf spot. These two diseases are troublesome on certain varieties of evergreen azaleas.

The leaf gall disease of azalea is caused by a fungus (*Exobasidium vaccinii*) that produces great quantities of spores. These spores which are spread on air currents or by splashing water may infect the youngest plant leaves, causing them to become thickened and fleshy (Fig. 1). Sometimes the entire leaf bud is infected, and all leaves that develop from the bud are infected and fleshy. Thickened parts of the leaf eventually are covered by a white bloom of fungus spores that may then spread to other plants.

This disease is most serious when weather is moist and temperature relatively low. In greenhouses the disease becomes serious in the spring, decreases in severity as the temperature rises in the summer and then becomes serious again in the fall. It is also troublesome on azalea plants in landscape plantings, particularly for those on north or east exposures.

Some evergreen azalea varieties that are forced under glass are more susceptible to infection than others. When plants are growing under crowded conditions the fungus may become severe on the following varieties: Hexe, Lentengroot, Miss Cottage Gardens, L. C. Bobbink, and Red Wing. A number of other azalea varieties and also several rhododendron species have been reported as susceptible, but they are seldom bothered to any extent. Other varieties growing in close association with infected plants remain free of galls. Among this group are Eric Schame, Paul Schame, Chimes, Christmas Red, Madame Alfred Saunders, Alaska, and Albert and Elizabeth. This is not a complete list and will be revised as more information is obtained.

The leaf spot disease of azalea caused by *Septoria azalea* may also be severe under conditions of high humidity and relatively low temperature. Spores of the leaf spot fungus are spread from diseased to healthy plants in splashing water. When plants become infected, a dark brown spot
develops which later turns lighter and may cover a considerable area of the leaf (Fig. 2.) As spots
develop, leaves turn yellow and may drop. In brown areas on the leaves, black fruiting structures
of the fungus can be seen. From these black fruiting structures, white masses of spores are
extruded under conditions of high humidity. The observed plants that are most seriously affected
by this disease are the Christmas flowering types, Paul and Eric Schame.

Disease Control
Spray trials show that the leaf gall disease

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatments</th>
<th>Rate per 100 gal.</th>
<th>Total new galls on 156 plants on</th>
<th>Total galls developed during season</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of spray</td>
<td>6-5</td>
<td>6-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untreated</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puratized</td>
<td>1 pt.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferbam</td>
<td>2 lbs.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nabam + Fe, Mg, Zn, salt</td>
<td>2 qt. + 4.5 gm.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copper A</td>
<td>3 lbs.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other trials it was found that these same materials were effective in controlling the Septoria
leaf spot of azalea, provided applications were started early in the season. With Septoria leaf spot
disease, it is advisable to make a first application in late February or early March, particularly on
Paul and Eric Schame plants.

Table 1. Effectiveness of Different Fungicides in Controlling Azalea Leaf Gall: 1st
application April 4.

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