Diagnosing Plant Problems
Suggested Steps to Simplify Diagnostics

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Diagnosis - Keep it Simple

• Keep an Open Mind
• Listen to Clues
• Don’t Jump to Conclusions
• Use Your Resources
• What to Refer Elsewhere

Define the Problem

• Plant Identification
• Plant and It’s Community - Build a Picture
• Roots
• Foliage
• Soil
• Insect and Disease

Differentiate Between Living and Non-Living Causes

• Look for Patterns -
  – Ask for information about patterns
• Non-Uniform -
  – Distribution of affected plants
• Uniform -
  – Non-Living

When Did This Develop?

• When was the problem first noticed?
  – Plant development
  – Weather
  – Pests
• What conditions existed when first seen?
  – Newly planted, drought, frost
• Time frame
  – Past history, new or seen previously

Possible causes #1 - Living

• Fungus
• Bacterial
• Viral
• Nematodes
• Insects
• Animal
Possible Causes #2
Non-Living Factors

• Root Environment or Aerial
• Mechanical - breakage, etc.
• Physical - weather records (signs)
• Chemical - direct, translocated, drift

Once You Have Diagnosed the Problem

• What can be done now?
• What can be done later?
• Is the problem serious enough to warrant further study with the client?
• Systemic problems?
• Persistent problems?
• What is the chance of re-occurrence?