

United States Lavender Growers Association

ALERT!

Some growers in many different parts of the country are reporting infestations by the root-rotting fungus *Phytophthora nicotianae*. This is a pathogen that affects many kinds of plants, including lavender. Once present in the soil it is difficult to impossible to eradicate, and this alert is suggesting steps to avoid permanently infesting your growing grounds with this devastating pathogen. Some of the hybrids seem to be more resistant to the fungus, so we suggest you treat them all as 'suspect' regardless of how they appear visually.

USLGA is researching the outbreak and working with experts in plant pathology to determine the extent of the problem. Meanwhile, we will be sharing what we know about what can be done to reduce the possibility of infestation, and how to proceed once an infestation has been identified.

It is planned to host a webinar on *Phytophthora* for our membership in the very near future. We are working with nationally recognized plant pathologists to speak on this issue and provide an opportunity for a question and answer period.

If you think your lavender has been exposed to this pathogen, please email our Education & Research Committee at education@uslavender.org and provide the following information:

- Your name/farm
- Your phone number
- The description of what you have observed
- The description, if any, of any testing results you have received
- The source, if known, of the infected plants

You will be contacted if the committee needs more information.

Steps you can take to avoid being affected by *Phytophthora*:

Make inquiries of your supplier asking how they ensure their plant material is free of this pathogen

- Quarantine any plant material you receive, even if you know your supplier well. If possible take and save a few of the plugs for plant pathology sampling before the plants are put in the ground. Safest route is to put off planting until you receive results back from the pathology tests.
- Avoid overhead watering to reduce infection via splashing

- Avoid over-irrigating

If you believe you have been affected you can send material for testing Clemson University (they are serving as a consolidation point for consistent testing methodology):

- The Clemson University Plant Problem Clinic [PPC] can accept samples, and there is a \$20 fee for out-of-state samples. The PPC will process the samples and then send the cultures for identification.
- Link to the PPC website:
http://www.clemson.edu/public/regulatory/plant_industry/pest_nursery_programs/plant_prob_clinic/index.html
- The menu on the right side has links for sampling & submission guidelines as well as a sample submission form.

If you have received a confirmed diagnosis, here is some information per the USDA recommendations.

- Contact your state Agriculture Commissioner for them to take samples of the suspected pathogen
- Send separate samples to Clemson (see info above).
- Quarantine is necessary, but also sanitize all equipment, tools and shared areas.
- Keep plants that are suspect ALIVE, if possible. (The pathogen is what is called a 'resting spore' and needs to be sampled on a somewhat live plant. The plant and entire root as well as the soil must be intact. Photos are also helpful.)

USLGA will be publishing updates to this issue as they are available and verified.