

# Florida Landscapes

## The issue of Disease of Hollies

### (Sphaeropsis Tumefaciens)



Sphaeropsis Knot is sometimes a serious disease of Hollies, in Florida Landscape. They are valued for their distinctive, mostly evergreen foliage and colorful fruit, hollies are used extensively in Florida landscapes as shade trees and ornamental shrubs. As a result, the commercial production, sale, distribution and culture of hollies represent a significant component of Florida's "green industry".

All of the common holly species are susceptible and can be damaged by this disease. Sphaeropsis gall gets its name for the swollen and enlarged portions of diseased stems and branches. The most predominant symptom is the formation of witches brooms or small twigs that grow from the area just beyond the gall with tip dieback.

The pathogen is thought to be spread by pruning tools and cuttings taken from diseased plants. Unfortunately, no fungicides or chemicals are currently labeled to control the galls on holly. The best way to prevent the fungus is to minimize pruning of these trees to limit open wounds and sterilize tools between cuts. Severely infected holly trees should be removed and destroyed. This information was produced by Dr. El Barmad a Forest Pathologist, from the Division of Forestry, John Cornelius, of ValleyCrest Landscape Maintenance and Paul Woods of OLM Inc.

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07/15/08

