

Lilac Problems

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Do you have or have you noticed several lilac bushes or rows that do not look very good at all? This has been a common theme across the district over the last few weeks. I have had a number of contacts regarding lilacs that were virtually defoliated with leaves showing many spots on the leaves and browning leaves. Cercospora (CERCO SPORA) leaf spot appears to be the cause. This is one of those diseases that only shows up during wet, humid summers. That we had during the month of July. Though the shrubs look bad, loss of leaves this late in the season will not harm otherwise healthy plants. Therefore, there is no need to apply a fungicide. Also, an application this late would not help anyway. However, cleaning up dead leaves will reduce the amount of inoculum for next year and is recommended. This disease is weather-dependent and requires wet, humid weather at certain times to flourish. Therefore, lilacs that were hit hard this year may not become infected next year. Even if we do have another wet summer that encourages this disease, we do not recommend a fungicide application as damage to the plant is negligible.

For more information on this and other topics, please contact the local K-State Research and Extension Office. K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.