



The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

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PRESS RELEASE

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Boxwood Blight Found on Pachysandra in a Connecticut Landscape

New Haven, CT – In October 2011, samples of boxwood, a popular ornamental plant, were confirmed by plant pathologists at The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) as infected by *Cylindrocladium pseudonaviculatum*, a fungus previously unknown in North America. It is not clear how this plant pathogen entered the United States, but several hundred thousand plants have since been found to be infected in nurseries and garden centers in 10 states and 2 Canadian provinces. The fungus can kill boxwood, and there are no currently labeled fungicides that will cure an infected plant. Diseased plants in Connecticut have been disposed of by burial or incineration pursuant to state guidelines.

Experiments conducted under controlled conditions in 2011 and 2012 at CAES revealed that the boxwood blight fungus was capable of infecting pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*), a common groundcover plant. These results, published in *Plant Disease* (2012, 96:1069), provided evidence of a potentially broadened host range for this pathogen, although natural infections had not yet been documented. On June 29, 2012, CAES plant pathologists confirmed that the boxwood blight fungus infected an established planting of pachysandra in a landscape setting in Fairfield County, CT. The diseased pachysandra was adjacent to infected boxwood plants.

“These new findings indicate a much greater potential for the spread of boxwood blight in nurseries and private properties,” said Louis A. Magnarelli, Ph.D., Director of the CAES. “Pachysandra will now be regulated along with boxwood under CAES statutory authority to prevent the movement of infected plants and further spread of the fungus.”

Guidelines on best management practices concerning boxwood blight for landscapers, commercial plant producers, and homeowners, plus other information on the fungus (including photographs of infected plants) are available on the “Boxwood Blight” page of the CAES website (www.ct.gov/caes).

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