

PRESCRIPTION PROGRAMS

HYPOXYLON CANKER

There are many different kinds of Hypoxylon fungus in the *Xylaria* genus of fungus, but in Atlanta the most conspicuous is the aggressive vascular fungus that kills hardwoods not by attacking the wood but by directly attacking the vascular system. Instead of fruiting bodies that sprout from the base of the tree, as is common with most wood-decaying fungi, this fungus produces gray or black chalky plates all over the bark. These are the fungi's fruiting bodies, which release spores into the air looking for new hosts. The fungus does not spread quickly from tree to tree; it mostly attacks trees that are already stressed or weakened. But once within a tree it moves very quickly and an infected tree will almost certainly die.

Trees that have been killed by Hypoxylon are usually very weak because the fungus decays the wood so quickly, and degrades the strength of the sapwood. For this reason, most trees that have been killed with Hypoxylon are removed using mechanical lifts such as cranes or bucket trucks. It is not usually safe to climb on a trunk or limb smaller than 15" in diameter after Hypoxylon has dried out the wood. This makes some manual removals very difficult and hazardous.

Since Hypoxylon canker only attacks trees that are weakened to begin with, the best way to avoid this killer is to maintain your trees in as healthy a state as possible. Contact an Arborist from Boutte Tree Inc. to do everything possible to keep your trees healthy. There are almost always changes that can be made in the immediate environment of a tree to improve its health and chance of survival. Boutte Tree offers organic fertilizer, soil de-compaction and aeration, and other services to help trees that are already stressed and vulnerable to diseases such as Hypoxylon.

