

5. Tar Spot of Maple

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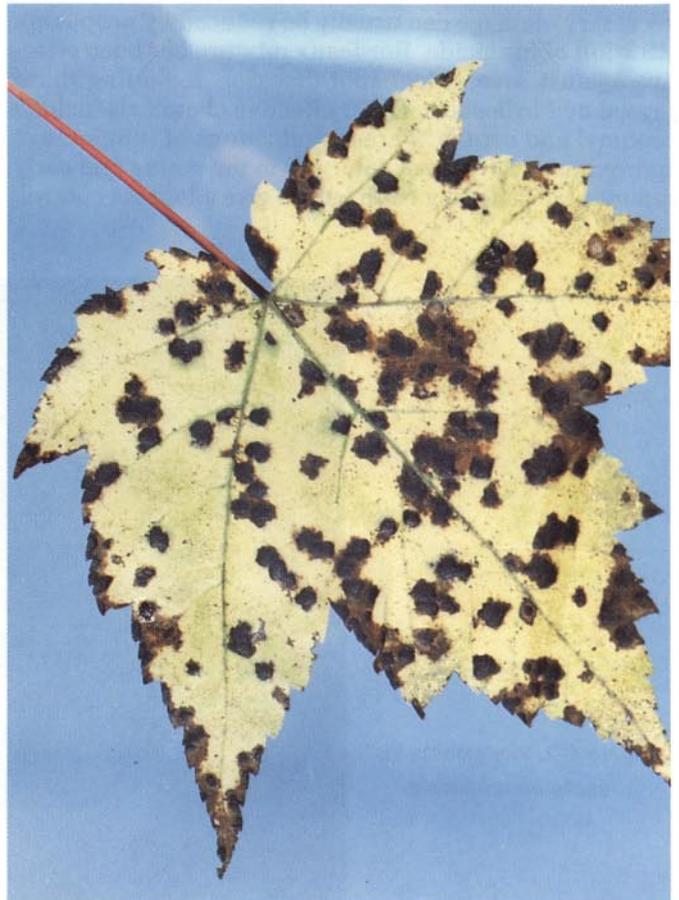
Tar spot on maples is caused by the fungus *Rhytisma acerinum* and related species. Other species of *Rhytisma* cause tar spot of other hosts.

Hosts and Distribution

Tar spot is a foliage disease common to red and silver maples; it has also been reported on bigleaf, Norway, sugar, and sycamore maples. The disease occurs on maples throughout the eastern and Great Lakes states, in Oregon and Washington, and in Manitoba. Tar spot occurs on maple in Nebraska, but its distribution in other states of the Great Plains is uncertain.

Symptoms and Signs

One or more small greenish-yellow spots on the upper leaf surface indicates early infection. These spots appear from mid to late July. By late summer, conspicuous black tar-like structures, up to one-half inch in diameter, form within the chlorotic areas (fig. 5-1). The lower leaf surface opposite the tar-like structures is cupped and less black. By mid-fall the tar spots appear ridged and are sometimes referred to as "wrinkled scab" (figs. 5-2, 5-3). The tar spots are stromata, which contain two types of fruiting bodies, spermogonia and apothecia.



Figures 5-1 and 5-2. Tarspots on maple leaves infected with *Rhytisma acerinum*.

