

## News

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 **Raymond Poe, Director ● Bruce Rauner, Governor**

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**BOXWOOD BLIGHT DECLARED A NUISANCE IN ILLINOIS**

***IDOA Director signs nuisance declaration***

SPRINGFIELD, IL – After a public hearing at the Illinois Department of Agriculture on Tuesday, March 28, Director Raymond Poe signed a declaration to affirm Boxwood Blight a nuisance in Illinois.

“Now that Boxwood Blight is a known nuisance in Illinois, we can begin the eradication process and keep it from spreading,” said Director Poe. “The Illinois Green Industry Association, along with the affected nurseries, have been very cooperative and we look forward to working with them to contain this disease.”

Boxwood Blight (*Calonectria pseudonaviculata*) is a fungus affecting Boxwood plants, which are commonly used in landscape designs throughout the state. It only affects Boxwood, Pachysandra, and Sarcococca plants and can be fatal, especially to young plants. Defoliation, stem cankers, and leaf spots, which occur as light or dark brown circular lesions surrounded by a yellow ring, are the main symptoms. Stem cankers appear dark brown or black in a linear or

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diamond shape and are easiest to see on new tissue. Defoliation is usually the final symptom.

To prevent further spread of this fungal disease, interstate transport of known affected or suspect plants or material is discouraged, along with increased attention to sanitation of equipment and tools.

Thus far, Boxwood Blight has been detected in three Illinois counties (Cook, Lake, and Clinton). At this time, it is not believed to be widespread or established in Illinois. Residents should not be concerned with Boxwood Blight “showing up” in their landscape naturally. The infected plants, thus far, have been sourced from out of state. It is recommended that you only purchase plants from licensed sources and maintain your plants to keep them vigorous.

This fungus is not a new pathogen to the United States. It was originally discovered in 2011 and has now been found in 20 states across the country. The Department is proactively working with industry professionals to educate the public about this pathogen, including the proper form of disposal of infected plants.

“With the signing of the nuisance declaration, the Illinois Department of Agriculture can now begin taking the appropriate steps to eradicate any plants that have or may be showing symptoms of the disease,” said Warren Goetsch, Deputy Director and head of the Department’s Bureau of Environmental Programs.

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Tips for Controlling Boxwood Blight:

* All Boxwood Blight infected plants should be destroyed by burning the plant or burying the plant at least two feet in the ground.
* Plant containers, pruners and other tools frequently used within and between different blocks of plants should be disinfected.
* Wear clean, disposable booties and wash off debris and dirt entirely from soles of shoes between fields or landscapes.
* Wear clean, laundered clothes between fields or landscapes.
* Never work in fields when the plants are wet.

More information regarding Boxwood Blight is available online:
 Illinois Department of Agriculture: [www.agr.state.il.us/boxwoodblight](http://www.agr.state.il.us/boxwoodblight)

Illinois Green Industry Association: [www.illinoisgreen.net/](http://www.illinoisgreen.net/)

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