



NORTHERN HARDWOOD NOTES

Sapstreak Disease Of Sugar Maple

Sapstreak is a fatal disease of sugar maple that usually enters the tree through basal trunk scars or root wounds. The disease most often affects large, wounded trees left after logging. The fungus causing sapstreak readily infects stumps or cut logs during the summer months. So, wounding sugar maples during this time will increase the potential for disease spread. In the Lake States, sapstreak has only been found in a few areas of Michigan and at one location in Wisconsin. Although few trees have been killed by sapstreak, it has the potential to become a serious disease in sugar maple stands.

Symptoms of sapstreak include stunted foliage throughout the crown, gradual branch dieback, and gray stain developing in the lower bole and roots. The radiating, streaked pattern of the stain is characteristic of this disease. Often symptoms go unnoticed until the affected tree dies, normally 3 to 4 years after infection.



Stump of a diseased sugar maple showing radiating pattern of stain.

Sapstreak is spread from tree to tree or stump to tree by insects that carry the sticky spores. Spread of the disease can be reduced or prevented by removing infected trees, avoiding summer logging, and preventing wounding, especially to roots and bases of trunks. Infected trees should be removed as soon as possible to minimize degrade from stain. Early detection and prompt removal of infected trees will prevent sapstreak from becoming a serious threat to sugar maple stands.

Reference

Kessler, K. J., Jr. Sapstreak disease of sugar maple. Forest Pest Leaflet 128. St. Paul, Minnesota: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, North Central Forest Experiment Station; 1972. 4 p.

James W. Walters