

## LEAF SCORCH OF DOGWOODS

A common complaint with dogwoods at this time of year, after a period of hot, dry weather, is that the leaf edges are brown. Some leaves also develop some fairly large brown spots on the leaves. The leaves usually are also droopy, reddish, and curled. These are symptoms of leaf scorch of dogwood.

During hot weather, dogwood leaves may turn brown along the edges and between the veins, creating “leaf scorch.” Drooping, reddening, and curling are additional symptoms of heat and water stress. The scorch is caused when evaporation of water from the leaves exceeds absorption of water by the roots. This can occur because of dry soil, a weak root system, trunk injury, high temperatures, or shallow soil.

Leaf scorch rarely kills dogwoods, but it can weaken them. Prevent it by planting dogwoods in partial shade and keeping the soil slightly moist during hot weather periods. It’s also important not to over water by keeping the soil totally saturated. This will suffocate the roots and quickly lead to root or crown rot.

Mulch the soil around the dogwood with a loose bark mulch to conserve water, cool the root zone, and prevent weed competition. However, don’t over-mulch. Mulch thicker than three to four inches may lead to more surface roots which will be susceptible to winter injury, high temperature damage, and drought.

(Adapted from: [Virginia Horticultural Factsheet-Summer Leaf Scorch of Dogwood](#)  
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