



Redwood Barn Nursery

1607 Fifth Street Davis, California

Entomosporium leaf spot fungus on ornamental pears.

Entomosporium causes leaf spots which spread a bit on the leaf, and sometimes the infection is in the petiole (the part that attaches the leaf to the stem). When the petiole gets infected, that leaf yellows and drops.

Sometimes we get rain in April and early May, which leads to infection. I have records of heavy infection years in 2011, 2019, and now in 2026.

If the rainstorms occur a few days apart, we get continued infection. Spots show up in a couple of days, leaves begin to drop a couple of days later. It rains again, infection occurs again.

The cycle stops when it stops raining, temperatures get into the 80s, and daytime humidity drops below about 50%. That means that by mid-May we are rarely seeing new infection, by late May any leaves that are going to drop have done so, and new growth is already replacing the lost leaves.

Entomosporium leaf spot can also infect India hawthorn (*Rhaphiolepis*), *Photinia*, loquat, and some other members of the rose family. Similar diseases affect other, unrelated species such as walnuts; not the same pathogen, but the same basic lifecycle.

There is no spray that cures this. Any sprays that are recommended are likely to be used as preventatives, so they wouldn't work now anyway, and most have very low efficacy. Home remedies such as baking soda and neem will likely do more harm than good. The disease isn't caused or spread by your watering; rainfall distributed the spores.

Bottom line: nothing to be done except to rake up and throw away the leaves on the ground, and just be patient. The tree will outgrow it.

Some folks have fireblight, especially on their fruiting pears, but this is different. Fireblight can be pruned out, and it's simplest to wait until the infection cycle ends with warmer, drier weather. There is no spray that I can recommend for home gardeners to use for fireblight, and spraying isn't typically necessary anyway. A healthy tree will outgrow fireblight. But if you're choosing a fruiting pear to plant, avoid those that are susceptible (Bartlett) and plant one that is resistant (Moonglow, Warren, etc.).



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Fireblight, above.

Left: on a crabapple, early infection
Right: on an Asian pear (20th Century, highly susceptible). Note the branch dieback. Fireblight is caused by a bacteria, *Erwinia amylovora* and attacks apples, pears, and some related plants. Fireblight can kill susceptible varieties and species.

Entomosporium leaf spot fungus.

Below, on a *Pyrus kawakami*. Left on *Pyrus calleryana* (Bradford etc.) and some other related plants. It just attacks the leaves, which drop when the disease invades the petiole. Leaf spot doesn't kill the tree but causes a lot of leaves to fall when we have spring rains.

