



DO YOUR PLANTS WILT IN WINTER? MAYBE IT'S ROOT ROT.

Excerpt from UC IPM website, Quick Tips

When well-watered trees or other plants start to wilt, one cause may be root or crown rot caused by *Phytophthora*. Almost all fruit and nut trees and most ornamental trees and shrubs can develop root or crown rot if the soil around the plant remains moist for prolonged periods. Tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, and other vegetable crops also can be affected. The most important way to prevent *Phytophthora* root and crown rot is proper irrigation.



LEAVES APPEAR WATER-STRESSED BUT DON'T RESPOND TO IRRIGATION.

- Leaves may turn dull green, yellow, red, or purplish and may wilt.
- Often only plants in the most poorly drained areas are affected.
- Unlike plants suffering from water stress, plants don't recover when irrigated.

SYMPTOMS ON ROOTS AND CROWNS VARY.

- Darkened areas in the bark around the crown and upper roots may develop, sometimes with gumming.
- Reddish-brown streaks or zones may be apparent in the inner bark and outer layer of wood.

WATER MANAGEMENT IS KEY TO PREVENTING ROT.

- Avoid prolonged soil saturation or standing water around tree bases.
- Adjust sprinkler heads and drip systems, so water doesn't hit trunks.
- Provide good soil drainage.
- Raised beds can be a good solution for vegetables where drainage is a problem.
- Group plants according to irrigation needs and water accordingly.
- Avoid salinity and water stress between irrigations.

TAKE STEPS TO AVOID PROBLEMS WHEN YOU PLANT.

- Don't plant trees or other plants deeper than they were planted in the nursery.
- Never cover the graft union with soil or mulch.
- Select certified nursery stock and resistant rootstocks or varieties when available.
- Don't maintain irrigated turf around the base of trees.

TREES CAN SOMETIMES BE SAVED IF CAUGHT IN EARLY STAGES.

- At the first sign of leaf wilting, examine the tree at the soil line for rot.
- Cut away any bark that looks affected.
- Remove soil from around the base of the tree down to the top of the main roots, and allow the crown tissue to dry out.
- Keep water away from the crown and trunk.
- Young trees may die rapidly; older trees may survive for several years.

Read more about [Phytophthora Root and Crown Rot in the Garden](#).