Plant Pathology Circular No. 71
July 1968

Florida Department of Agriculture
Division of Plant Industry

LIMB BLIGHT DISEASE CAUSED BY CORTICIUM SALMONICOLOR B. & BR.

S. A. Alfieri, Jr.

Corticium salmonicolor B. & Br. is a basidiomycetous fungus first described from Ceylon in 1873 by Berkeley and Broome (1). Since that time, this same fungus has been known to have at least five synonyms (5, 6). Edgerton (2) in 1911 presumably made the first report of the occurrence of this fungus in the United States. It was found on fig, a new host, in Louisiana. Although it has been reported from the southern tier of states in the United States (6), it appears to thrive best and occurs with greater frequency in regions of the tropics and subtropics (A).

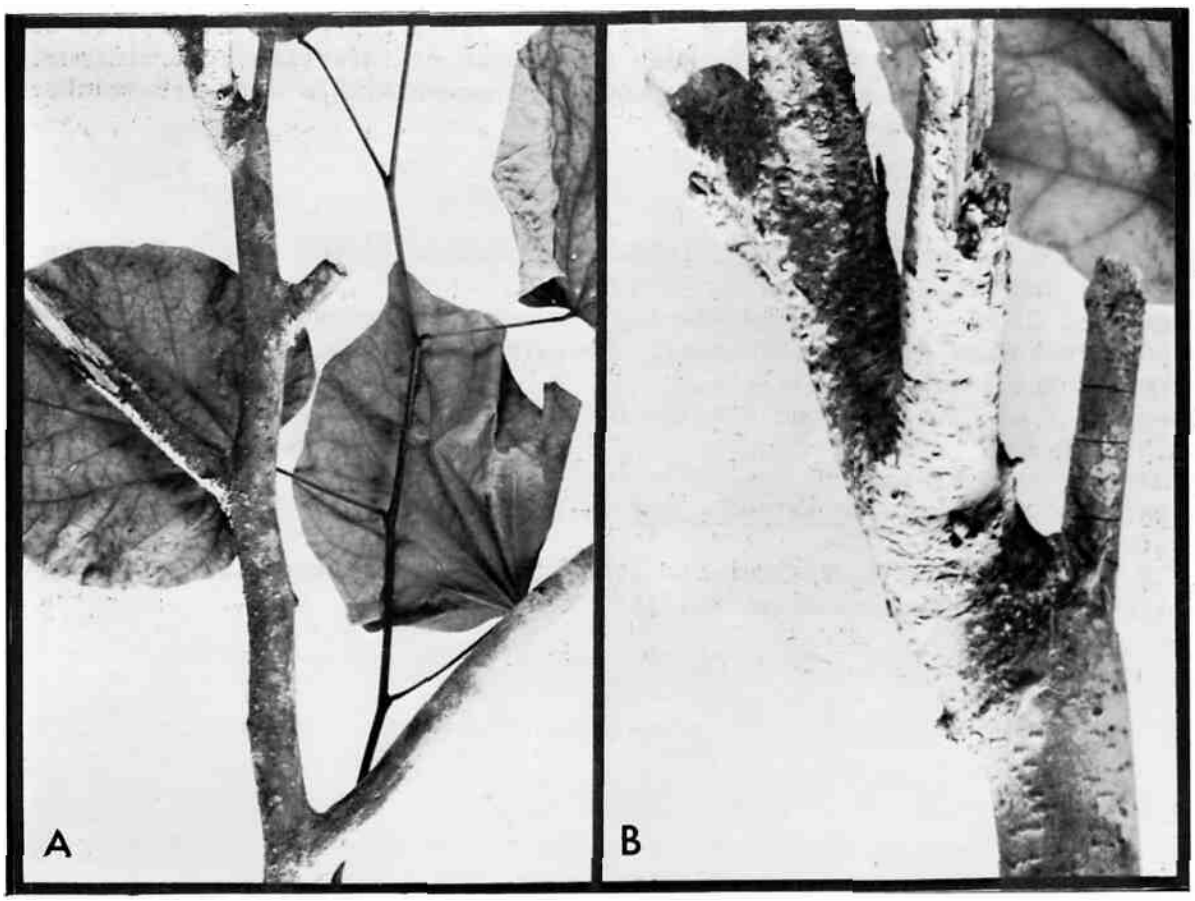

Fig. 1. Limb blight of Cercis canadensis L. caused by Corticium salmonicolor B. & Br. A) The pink mycelial mat of the fungus on the lower side of the branches, B) enlargement of a portion of "**A**".

Under warm, moist climatic conditions the pink fungus mat produces great numbers of spores which appear to be the principal means of dissemination. The spores are undoubtedly rain-splashed and/or wind-borne to other hosts, thus establishing new infections.

A number of various disease names have been ascribed to this fungus: pink disease of rubber, cacao, citrus, oleander, black pepper, tea, and Cinchona; twig blight of pear; and limb blight of fig and apple (7). A new and unreported host of C. salmonicolor in Florida is redbud, Cercis canadensis L. (3).

SYMPTOMS. Characteristically, the fungus appears as a pink or salmon-colored, smooth mycelial mat on branches of its hosts, not too distant from the tip. The fungus mat varies in size from a fraction of an inch to 12 inches or more, usually established unilaterally on the shaded or lower side of affected branches such as is shown in Fig. 1. Progressive development of the fungus may lead to an envelopment of the branch, accompanied by a brown discoloration of the cambial layer, and wilting and dying of the leaves (6).

CONTROL. Since the fungus thrives best under warm, moist conditions, dense or closely spaced plantings should be avoided. Maintaining plants in a healthy, vigorous state of growth helps to reduce the incidence of this disease. Infected branches should be pruned out well below the affected areas and should be burned or completely eradicated to keep the source of infection at a minimum. Finally, a fungicide such as a fixed copper or maneb with a spreader-sticker should be applied to affected plants.

Literature Cited

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