

# Proper Disposal of Boxwood Cuttings and Decorations



As decorations incorporating living or dried boxwood cuttings beautified our homes and communities this past holiday season, it is important consumers are aware boxwood blight has been detected in in our state. An Alabama nursery recently received a shipment of boxwood cuttings from another state that was positive for the serious fungal plant disease. The Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries' (ADAI) Plant Protection inspectors destroyed the shipment to protect plant nurseries and dealers, as well as home landscapes, from the boxwood disease.

Consumers can minimize the risk of spreading boxwood blight to their landscape by following these instructions:

Please dispose of boxwood cuttings and holiday decorations by placing them in a garbage bag and discarding them along with your household garbage. DO NOT dispose of boxwood in any way that cuttings or pieces end up being made into garden mulch. Do not place boxwood plant material by the curb for municipal pick-up, since customarily it is ground into mulch.

Boxwood blight, a widespread fungal disease affecting only boxwood plants, is always a concern, not only in nurseries, garden centers, and landscapes but also for homeowners. Especially during the holiday season when boxwoods are used for decorating, it's important for florists and homeowners to be aware that boxwoods can be a source of the disease, even when dried. Consumers should be aware that dried wreaths and garlands purchased online or at large box stores can be shipped from all over the country with no controls over possible boxwood blight infestations. After use, proper disposal of the plant material is critical.

Initial symptoms of boxwood blight appear as dark or light brown spots on the leaves. The spots often have dark borders and enlarge in a concentric or circular pattern. Infected leaves turn brown or straw colored, so the overall plant looks "blighted." Defoliation often occurs very quickly after the leaf symptoms first develop.

If consumers comply with these recommendations, spread of boxwood blight can be reduced. For additional information, please call the ADAI Plant Protection Division, at 334-240-7225.