Ligustrum, Privet *Ligustrum japonicum*

http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG022

Propagation

Ligustrum are propagated by softwood cuttings taken in spring, or 5 – 10 cm semi-hardwood cuttings with a heel taken at the end of the summer. These will root in intermittent mist in 5-12 weeks.

Irrigation

The average growing season daily water use of ligustrum in #1 containers in central Florida is 12.8 oz per day or 0.24 inch. Ligustrum in three gallon containers used 38 oz. per day or 0.33 inch. These values are the average over a year, and daily values may vary by as much as 50% from this amount.

Diseases and Pests

The current Insect Management Guide for Commercial Foliage and Woody Ornamentals can be found at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IG012. The current Professional Disease Management Guide for Ornamental Plants can be found at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PP123.

Chilli Thrips (*Scirtothrips dorsalis*)

**Recognition:** Chilli thrips damage will first be noticed as distorted new leaves and brown marking on the leaves. Feeding damage causes scars on young leaves that cause leaf distortion and discoloring. Small yellowish thrips can be seen by knocking foliage against a hard white board. The adults are 2 mm in length. Eggs are laid within plant tissues and may be sexually or parthenogenically produced. They complete their life cycle within 14-20 days. They are capable of continuous generations per year, but generally undergo 4-8 generations. Adults can over-winter in the soil or protected in plant parts.

**Contributing factors:** Chilli thrips have a very wide host range and may be found on many plants in the nursery. Damaging populations are often not detected until the damage is done because the feeding occurs on young
leaves while in the bud. Life cycles are slowest at the upper and lower temperature extremes. They have been documented to spread several diseases including tomato spotted wilt virus.

**Management recommendations:** The latest management recommendations can be found at [http://www.mrec.ifas.ufl.edu/lso/thripslinks.htm#DOCUMENTS](http://www.mrec.ifas.ufl.edu/lso/thripslinks.htm#DOCUMENTS). Swirski predatory mites have been shown to control Chilli thrips populations in some circumstances and currently is the best option for biological control.

**White peach scale**

**Recognition:** A heavy infestation of this scale will form a white crust on stems and twigs of *L. sinense*. Live scales are moist when rubbed between your fingers, whereas dead scales are dry and crusty.

**Contributing factors:** unknown

**Management recommendations:** Monitor for beneficial insects and signs of parasitism. Use soap and oil sprays when first noticed or a systemic insecticide to knock down severe infestations.

**Cercospora leaf spot** (*Cercospora spp.*)

**Recognition:** Symptoms are yellow leafspots with purple margins on the upper surface of the leaves, and brown raised areas on the undersides of leaves. Premature leaf drop and general thinning of foliage may result.

**Contributing factors:** Although typically observed on almost all older plantings of *L. japonicum*, it is worst when poor plant health, dense plantings, and/or shady conditions slow the growth of the plant. The disease is predominant in the late summer and fall.

**Management recommendations:** Provide adequate fertilizer and water. Avoid overhead irrigation, and/or water early in the day. Avoid excessive pruning of hedges. Use approved fungicides, being sure to spray both surfaces of the leaves. Multiple applications are often required.
Corynespora leaf spot (Corynespora cassiicola)

Recognition: Symptoms are small round leafspots, initially reddish, then enlarging and turning light brown with purple borders. The spots may coalesce and the disease may cause leaves to drop.

Contributing factors: Warm, moist conditions are favorable for this disease. Only L. sinense is susceptible to this pathogen.

Management recommendations: Minimize overhead irrigation. Space plants appropriately for good air circulation. Use approved fungicides when necessary.

Mushroom Root Rot (Armillaria tabescens)

Recognition: Mushroom root rot causes a slow decline and thinning plant canopy. Desiccated foliage on affected stems has a gray-green coloration. One or more stems may be killed. Bark removal at the base of the plant will reveal white, mat-like fungal growth (mycelium). Clusters of honey or amber-colored mushrooms can sometimes be observed emerging from the trunk or roots nearby.

Contributing factors: Mushroom root rot is a wood rot fungus which colonizes old roots and stumps as well as living plants. This disease often occurs when plants reach old age. It can spread from one plant to others nearby through root grafts.

Management recommendations: There is no control for this disease. Remove the diseased plant as well as adjacent ones in a hedge. Remove roots and soil and replace with clean topsoil, or use a soil fumigant before replanting.
Wet root rot diseases (*Phytophthora* and *Pythium* spp.)

**Recognition:** Above-ground symptoms are poor growth, thinning of the foliage, and yellowing of leaves, with the oldest foliage affected first. These symptoms may be one-sided on the plant. Wet rots cause a soft decay of the outer layers of roots, which can be easily stripped off between two fingers, leaving the firm, white stele intact.

**Contributing factors:** The disease is triggered by periods of excessive soil moisture. Conditions that favor disease development include planting too deep, poor drainage, shallow rooting, and poor water management.

**Management recommendations:** Check roots of nursery-grown plants before planting into the landscape. Provide adequate drainage, and reduce irrigation. Apply labeled fungicides if problem is diagnosed early and cultural problems corrected.

Ligustrum Cultivars

Japanese Privet, or Ligustrum japonicum, has glossy evergreen leaves and is often used as a shrub or hedge but can also be grown as a small tree. It produces curved multiple trunks and dark green canopy creating an interesting architectural focus. Flowers are small, white, and bad-smelling in terminal panicles during spring in the south, followed by blue-black berries which persist most of the year and are popular with birds.

Many cultivars are available, including:
‘Silver Star’, with deep green leaves mottled with grey and edged in creamy white;
‘Texanum’, very similar to the species but lower growing and with denser growth;
‘Fraseri’ with yellow-green new growth;
‘Jack Frost’ with glossy green leaves with a thin edge of creamy white;
‘Lake Tresca’ with small leaves and drooping lower branches that form a mound;
‘Lusterleaf’ with large, thick leaves;
‘Suwanee River’ with compact erect branches;
‘Variegatum’ with leaves variegated and edged with white;
‘Howardii’ new growth is golden

*Ligustrum x vicaryi* has golden variegated leaves and bright yellow new growth. *L. quihoui* can be used as a rootstock to protect against nematodes.
L. sinense is another commonly grown privet with similar requirements. It has smaller green and white leaves

Sources


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