

Shoestring

Shoestring virus

Blueberry shoestring is a widespread disease.

Symptoms. Symptoms appear about 4 years after infection. Elongated reddish streaks (3 to 20 mm long) appear on green stems, especially on the side exposed to the sun. Infected leaves are red or purplish, elongated and straplike. Leaves may become cupped if one side of the leaf fails to develop. Flowers may be reddish and fruit may be reddish purple instead of blue at ripening. Bushes slowly decline.

Disease

cycle. Blueberry shoestring virus is vectored by the blueberry aphid (*Illinoia pep-peri*). Transmission begins when aphids emerge in the spring and ends just



Oak leaf pattern (left). Streaks on stems (right).

before leaf drop in the fall. Aphids move from infected bushes to neighboring healthy ones as they feed. Aphids carrying the virus may also be transported down the row by mechanical harvesters.

Management. Remove infected bushes; use virus-tested planting stock; apply insecticides when aphids first appear; wash harvester to remove aphids before entering another field; Plant resistant or tolerant varieties.



Straplike leaves on an infected plant.



Pink-tinged blossoms appear on infected plants.

Additional resources:

[Michigan Blueberry Facts: Blueberry Aphid & Blueberry Shoestring Virus](#)