

## Gibbera twig blight

*Gibbera vacciniicola* (fungus)

This disease appears to be limited to the northeastern United States and eastern Canada.

**Symptoms.** The most characteristic symptom is black, raised, cushion-shaped fruiting bodies (stromata) on twigs and canes. Stromata can occur singly or in clusters and are usually bordered by a distinct red margin. Fruit yield may be reduced, and infected twigs appear to be predisposed to winter injury. Heavily infected twigs are often killed when fruiting bodies form girdling cankers (photo below).



Cheryl Smith, Univ. of NH



Cheryl Smith, Univ. of NH

Disease incidence can be as high as 40 percent of the twigs infected. Cultivars Berkeley and Herbert are susceptible and Northland is highly susceptible.

**Disease cycle.** The fungus overwinters in stromata on infected twigs and canes. Ascospores are released during rainy periods from mid-April to late June, with peak release occurring in May, and infect young twigs and canes. The appearance of tiny, black fruiting bodies on one-year old twigs in early fall is the first evidence of infection.

**Management.** Remove and destroy infected twigs and canes; avoid susceptible cultivars; apply fungicides starting just prior to bloom.