

Prescribed burning is fire applied in a skillful manner under exacting conditions to a specific area for a defined forest management objective. One of its many benefits is control of diseases such as Irregulare (formerly Annosus) root rot and brown spot needle blight in southern pine stands.

IRREGULARE ROOT ROT CONTROL: For stands infected with Irregulare root rot (IRR), burn at least twice before thinning, once in the 6 months preceding the cutting operation. Burn at least once more after thinning. Prescribed burning reduces infection by reducing the number of fungus conks present on stumps or standing trees.

BROWN SPOT NEEDLE BLIGHT: Prescribed fire is the most widely used form of control for brown spot needle blight in longleaf pine. Before establishing a longleaf pine plantation, use a prescribed burn to kill any form of the disease. Once trees are planted, perform a second burn after the first year of growth. Longleaf pine is resistant to fire and will survive prescribed burns. The fire not only kills brown spot needle blight, it also kills competing vegetation. When competing vegetation is killed, seedlings may grow out of the grass stage sooner. This makes seedlings less susceptible to brown spot needle blight. To completely eradicate brown spot needle blight, prescribed burns are recommended every three years on longleaf pine plantations.



Fungus conks present on tree infected with Irregulare root rot.



Brown spot needle blight.

Source: Annosus Root Rot in Eastern Conifers, USFS Forest Insect & Disease Leaflet 76
Photo Credit: USFS



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