Greenhouse Pest Message, April 30, 2025
Charles Krasnow, UConn Extension

Beech leaf disease (BLD) caused by *Litylenchus crenatae* is a significant disease of beech (*Fagus*) trees and shrubs. At this time, the mechanisms of spread of beech leaf disease are not well understood. The foliar nematode that causes this leaf disease is able to dry down, travel in air currents and splashing water, and infect expanding leaves. *Litylenchus* is an active swimmer, and is able to move rapidly to new leaves. The nematodes are also vectored by birds and insects. Symptoms include dark interveinal banding on the foliage, cupping, curling and distortion of the foliage.

Control is limited to exclusion, not transporting diseased plants, and insecticide treatments. Pylon (chlorfenapyr) and Avid (abamectin) are labeled to control this nematode as foliar applications. Arbotect 20-S is able to be used as a trunk injection and has shown control. The label recommends 2.8 fl. oz. of Arbotect 20-S for every 5" of trunk diameter. Injections should be made on the side of the root flare only after the foliage is fully expanded. Trees can be injected once every two years. Phosphite products have also shown promise as a trunk injection. There are SDHI fungicides that have shown experimental levels of suppression, such as Postiva and Broadform. These need additional confirmation in multiple testing locations.

Beech leaves showing symptoms of BLD (photo N. Brazee).

Beech leaves with advancing symptoms of BLD (photo C. Krasnow).