



*Illustration 1: Leyland Cypress in drought stress showing needle drop.*



*Illustration 2: Leyland Cypress infected with Seiridium canker showing dead branches.*

Leyland Cypress can be a problematic tree in the landscape with two distinct problems that are normally encountered. The first is a simple lack of water and subsequent needle drop. The second is more serious and also can be the result of the inadequate watering but ultimately has even more serious consequences.

If your Leyland's needles begin turn brown and then shed, it is a clear sign that you are not giving them adequate moisture. **Check your soil moisture.** If you see **completely dead branches** then you most likely have Seiridium canker. Notice the different look in the photos above. Illustration one shows the browning needles are internal and the tips are still green. In illustration 2 you see completely dead branches. Leylands also drop internal needles as they age which is completely normal. Lack of adequate water accelerates the sloughing process.

All trees, including Leyland Cypress, require at least 5 gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter applied one time per week. This means if you have a 6" diameter trunk on your tree, the tree needs 30 gallons of water applied one time per week. If you have a drip system with emitters then you should have 4 emitters per tree (one at the 12, 3, 6, and 9 position) for uniform watering. Have your irrigation specialist tell you how much water the four emitters apply per hour so that you can determine how long to water to obtain the proper amount per watering. If you use soaker hoses, make a 3'-4' loop around the base of each tree. Since soaker hoses are difficult to calibrate, water until you have moistened the soil to a depth of 6"-8" one time per week. Above 90 degrees you may have to add a second day of watering to maintain the soil moisture at the 6"-8" depth. Short, multiple waterings each week are of no value.

When Leylands begin to stress they become susceptible to attack by several fungal diseases. The worst of these diseases is Seiridium canker. Second in line of severity is Botryosphaeria canker. These fungi cause cankering on the trunks and stems which eventually leads to the death of the tree. These diseases are much worse if the tree is in drought stress. **Though no chemical treatment is effective against these fungi**, research indicates that if the trees are properly watered to eliminate drought stress, canker formation virtually ceases. If you do suspect the tree has Seiridium canker you may be able to see the tiny oozing cankers on the branches and trunks. You can slow the spread of the disease by removing completely dead branches.

**Once the trees have Seiridium canker then they will eventually die.** By simply keeping the trees adequately watered you can greatly decrease the development of the canker disease. This is a prime example of how proper watering of your landscape not only maintains plant health, but is also directly related to disease suppression and prevention! Keep all your plants properly watered, especially your Leyland Cypress!