



Slime Flux and Wetwood



Weeping "water" from the trunk of a tree is usually a sign of a bacterial disease called Slime Flux or Bacterial Wetwood. This bacterial infection has a pungent odor, often attracts flies, ants and wasps, and usually becomes evident in stressed trees of particular species such as Oak, Elm and Maple. As the bacteria multiply under the bark, pressure grows, and the bacteria begin to weep through cracks in the bark and discolor it. Sometimes the fluid drains down the bark of the tree, pooling at the base. This fluxing may not only be confined to the trunk, but may issue from branch wounds, crotches and cavities. In many trees the weeping or "fluxing" will usually subside and go away when environmental conditions improve.

Slime Flux can become a major problem if numerous spots are evident around the base, bark dieback is evident, the condition has persisted for a number of years, or if the tree has suffered some damage to the root system, impeding its ability to reclaim its vitality. Watering and applying light, drip line fertilization can help sustain the tree as it attempts to recover. Washing a bleach and water mixture (1 part bleach to 15 parts water) over the affected areas can help reduce the amount of fluxing on the surface of the bark. Repeated treatments once a week for four weeks may be necessary.