



Forest Health Protection, Southern Region

RED HEART,

caused by *Fomes pini*

Importance. - Red heart is of greatest significance in mature and overmature pines of all species. Infected trees suffer a loss of merchantable volume, in addition to being structurally unsound. The trees are valued, however, as woodpecker nesting sites.

Identifying the Fungus. - The fungus produces perennial conks, which are frequently hoof-shaped. Those that are not, lie flat against the stem, projecting a light brown surface outward. Hoof-shaped conks have a dull gray to dark brown upper surface, with concentric furrows parallel to the margin. The underside is light brown to brownish-gold, and velvety in texture.



Red heart conk.

Identifying the Injury. - Infected heartwood is often light red to reddish-brown. The advanced stages of heart rot appear as elongated white pockets or flecks parallel to the grain and separated by apparently firm wood. Affected trees exhibit swollen knots.



Advanced heart rot caused by red heart fungus.

Biology. - Infection normally occurs through dead branch stubs. Infected trees can survive indefinitely, but can be structurally unsound. This is of particular importance in recreation areas, where large old-growth pines are common.

Control. - Control is limited to harvesting mature and overmature pines where woodpecker habitat is not a consideration. In areas of intense public use, trees of high aesthetic value can be somewhat protected by correctly pruning dead and dying branches on the main stem to minimize infection.
