Arbutus Update: Interactions among soil conditions, root growth, and overall tree success

Linda Chalker-Scott, David Bergendorf, MS, UW, Angie Cahill, BS, UW

Overview of research

Cahill, A. and L. Chalker-Scott. 2001. The role of soil environment in *Arbutus menziesii* (Pacific madrone) seedling success. *American Nurseryman* 193 (8):26-34.

David Bergendorf. 2002. The influence of soil properties on the morphology and health of the Pacific madrone (*Arbutus menziesii* Pursh) in Seattle public parks. MS Thesis, University of Washington.

Research conclusions

- Compaction and texture significant in reducing growth and photosynthetic rates
- Texture is more important than compaction
- Clay loam and heavily compacted soils decreased photosynthesis, increased anthocyanin production, and decreased shoot and root growth, leaf area, and biomass
- For field trees with live crown ratio measurements of < 0.61, health improves with soils of higher gravel content

Recommendations for managing madrones in the landscape

- Plant madrones in coarse, well-drained soils
- Don't apply fungicides to madrone root zones
- Don't routinely apply fertilizers to madrone root zones Prevent soil compaction by applying thick (4-6") layers of coarse woody mulch such as arborist wood chips
- Install fences around and/or build raised boardwalks over madrone root zones in heavily trafficked areas

For more information:

Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott, WSU Associate Professor & Extension Urban Horticulturist
Email: lindacs@wsu.edu
Web: http://www.theinformedgardener.com
Blog: http://www.gardenprofessors.com
Books: http://www.sustainablelandscapesandgardens.com
Facebook page: www.facebook.com/TheGardenProfessors
Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/GardenProfessors