

ORNAMENTALS

• H O T L I N E •

March 18, 2016

INSECTS

Brian Kunkel
Ornamental IPM Specialist

With spring temperatures, insect activity has started on a small scale. No Eastern tent caterpillars on cherry or apple trees, yet. But, with a few days of 70°F weather; ambrosia beetles could be flying to host trees soon. Common ambrosia beetles in this area include *Xylosandrus germanus* and *Xylosandrus crassiusculus*. More common recently, these two pests attack a large number of tree species.

Both beetles are very small (<1/8") and attack weakened or stressed trees as well as apparently healthy trees. Usually in nursery settings; however, they will also attack trees in the landscapes well. Hosts for *X. germanus* include ash, beech, birch, dogwood, holly, linden, maple, pine and many others. Hosts for *X. crassiusculus* include: *Styrax*, redbud, dogwood, maple, plum, ornamental cherry, sweet gum, magnolia, azalea and many more. After a couple consecutive warm days, adult females fly looking for hosts and tunnel into twigs, branches or trunks of trees. Females chew into the tree and inoculate the tree with a fungus clogging xylem tissues and interfering with vascular transport. Larvae and adults feed on the fungus, not the wood of the plant. Visual evidence of beetles in trees include: toothpick-like frass projections sticking out from infested branches or trunks, small holes on infested branches, or areas of oozing sap. Infested trees may die from the galleries, introduced fungus, or pathogenic fungi such as *Fusarium* taking advantage of entry points caused by the tunneling. It takes 55 days to complete development from egg to adult. Although their spring is when populations are greatest, adults can be found throughout the summer in small densities with another small peak in fall.

Monitoring for beetle flight is an important management tool. Traps with ethanol will attract even small populations. Traps within 0.5 m (1.6 ft.) of the ground catch the greatest number of beetles. Treatment options include bark sprays with permethrin or bifenthrin on the trunk or major branches of host plants every two weeks until full leaf flush. Focus management efforts on major or high value tree species and infested trees should be kept for 50 days (so it becomes a sink for beetles) before removal.

DISEASES

Nancy Gregory
Plant Diagnostician

SNOW MOLD ON TURFGRASS is caused by two very different fungi, one causing pink snow mold and one causing gray snow mold. Gray snow mold (*Typhula* blight), has been seen in the region this week, and appears as roughly circular bleached patches 8 to 20 inches in diameter. The affected grass may be matted and bleached, with white to gray fungal growth evident.

(Continued)

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Issue 1

What's Hot!

Review your records from last year to note problem spots and key pests/key plants to focus on in this year's scouting.

Warm weather has brought shrubs and trees into bud early. Prepare for fruit tree sprays of fungicides, and for sprays on crabapple for scab as soon as possible. Fungicides are primarily preventative and must go on early.

Daffodils that emerged in December or early January may have some tip dieback. This will be site specific and should not affect flowering. Some people are reporting a shortened bloomtime for crocus this year. Here is a good article that might be useful when talking with customers.

<http://blog.extension.uconn.edu/2016/01/06/warm-december-weather-may-spell-trouble-for-plants/>

Two short courses in April include:
Plant Identification - Woody Shrubs - April 5, 4:30-5:30 PM, UDBG, Newark, DE.
Tree Identification Walk - April 7, 4:30 - 6 PM, Delaware State University campus, Dover, DE

For more information on these and other short courses, visit:
<http://extension.udel.edu/lawngarden/commercial-horticulture/2016-horticulture-short-courses/>

For more information

on pests & practices covered in this newsletter, call your County Extension Office

Helpful numbers to know:



Garden Line (for home gardeners only)	831-8862
New Castle County Extension	831-2506
Kent County Extension	730-4000
Sussex County Extension	856-7303

View more pictures at <http://sites.udel.edu/ornamentals/>

Diseases (Continued)

Small, round brown structures (sclerotia) may be seen on infected leaves. Disease may be severe when turf has been subjected to a long-lasting, deep, or compacted snow cover. Although the disease is unsightly, it rarely kills the grass. The *Typhula* fungus produces sclerotia to survive the summer. In late fall, these sclerotia produce spores or mycelial growth that infects grass plants under cover of snow during the winter. In areas where snow mold has occurred, it is likely to recur.

Snow molds can be managed with cultural methods. Avoid late fall applications of high nitrogen fertilizer that stimulate new growth, which is very susceptible to infection. Keep turf mowed if temperatures favor growth in the fall, such as last season. Avoid piles of snow that may linger over the lawn. If turf is matted after snow melt, rake the matted grass in order to encourage new spring growth, and overseed if necessary. In areas where snow molds have been a problem, use disease resistant varieties or use preventative fungicide applications. Apply fungicides in late fall before snow cover is expected.



Snow mold on turfgrass showing bleached and matted blades. Photo credit: Nancy Gregory

Editor: Susan Barton
Extension Horticulturist

GROWING DEGREE DAYS
AS OF March 15, 2016

- Swarthmore College (Delaware County, PA) = NA (15 = 5)
- Fischer Greenhouse (New Castle County) = 42.3 (15 = 3)
- Research & Educ. Center, Georgetown (Sussex County) = 49.8 (15 = 9)



Ambrosia bark beetle damage. Photo credit: G. Keith Douce



Magnolia stellata in full bloom. Photo credit: Tracy Wootten



Xylosandrus crassiusculus. Photo credit: N. Wright



Xylosandrus germanus. Photo credit: J.R. Baker and S.B. Bambara