

Pest Update (Aug 9, 2014)

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Note: samples containing living tissue may only be accepted from South Dakota. Please do not send samples of dying plants or insects from other states. If you live outside of South Dakota and have a question, instead please send a digital picture of the pest or problem. **Walnut samples may not be sent from any location – please provide a picture!**

Available on the net at:

<http://sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry/forest-health/tree-pest-alerts/>

Any treatment recommendations, including those identifying specific pesticides, are for the convenience of the reader. Pesticides mentioned in this publication are generally those that are most commonly available to the public in South Dakota and the inclusion of a product shall not be taken as an endorsement or the exclusion a criticism regarding effectiveness. Please read and follow all label instructions and the label is the final authority for a product's use on a particular pest or plant. Products requiring a commercial pesticide license are occasionally mentioned if there are limited options available. These products will be identified as such but it is the reader's responsibility to determine if they can legally apply any products identified in this publication.

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Plant development (Phenology) for the growing season



Plant development. The Ural false spireas are in full bloom, fairly typical for this time of year. This is probably one of our nicest, underutilized shrubs. The species does sucker and can become 5 to 7 feet tall but the cultivar 'Sem' (in the picture) only reaches a height of 3 to 4 feet. This shrub performs well in our climate and is tolerant of alkaline soils.

Timely Topics



We are also seeing a lot of hackberry branches with bright yellow leaves. Usually these are branches scattered throughout the canopy so there will be bright yellow patches of leaves mixed in with the normal green. If you look close, however, you find that the yellow leaves are only associated with certain limbs in the tree. And if you look near the base of these limbs you'll find the bark stripped in 1/2 inch sections or more that go almost completely around the limb. The reason for the bark being stripped is a fox squirrel feeding on the inner bark and the damage was done last spring. No one knows for sure why squirrels strip bark from hackberry and elm branches. The most likely reason is the squirrels are feeding on the sweet inner bark of these trees in the spring (higher sugar content in the spring). Usually the feeding does not extend completely around the branch so the branches often do not turn color and die until later in the summer. Unfortunately, there is not much that can be done to prevent it.

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E-samples

Yellow to white, angular blotches are appearing on hackberry leaves across the state during the last few weeks. This is **hackberry island chlorosis** and is due to a virus. There is not control for the problem but it does not seem to harm the tree, other than the off-color leaves.



Leafcutter bees are actively creating nests and that means lots of leaves look like someone took a cookie cutter to them. The leafcutter beetle cuts the edges of leaves in a very distinctive style, making a mostly smooth semicircle cut along the edges of the leaves. The missing leaf tissue was not eaten by the bee but carried back to create nest cells. The nests are filled with all the materials a young bee needs, nectar and pollen, and then a

female bee lays an egg inside the nest and seals it. While they will make a nest out of any leaf, the favorites are roses, ash and lilac (lilac is in the picture). Leafcutter bees are the timid cousins of the honey bee, they do not usually sting people and when they do, the sting is less painful. The bee is also solitary so you don't have to worry about a swarm of bees. These bees are also beneficial as they serve as pollinators for many different plants. The damage they do to plants by cutting the tissue is minimal and probably it is best just to tolerate the minor damage rather than treat. The only exception to this policy of "live and let live" is for roses. The leafcutter beetle will make nests in the soft pith of rose canes. When pruning rose canes seal off the exposed pith with candle wax to discourage entry by the bee. The leafcutter bee does not generally tunnel into rose canes unless there is a wound that exposes the pith.



I am also getting calls and pictures about walnuts dropping their leaves. This is almost an annual event. The problem is **walnut anthracnose** (*Gnomia leptostyla*), a very common fungus disease of this species. As with other anthracnose diseases, the tree becomes infected in the spring as the new leaves emerge in the cool, moist spring environment, but the symptoms – yellowing leaves with black spots that drop prematurely – do not occur until now. The disease overwinters in the twigs and fallen leaves (one reason an infected tree only has leaves remaining at the tips is the spores "rain" down from the twigs and these are usually above the "rain." The disease is not harmful to the tree and now is *not* the time for control.

Samples received/site visits

Beadle County

What is wrong with these ash trees?

The problems I could see from the pictures were ash leaf curl aphid and ash rust. These were covered in detail in earlier *Updates* (July 7, no 15 and June 18, no 12). The sample showed leafcutter bee damage (see information above). I suspect there are also some problems with the clearwing ash borer as I was able to find a gallery from this insect in one of the samples. All in all, these ashes have lots of problems!

Faulk County

What is causing the stippling and needle loss on this blue spruce?

This is spruce spider mite injury. Spider mites were covered the *Update* issue May 14, no 8. As you will note from the article I recommend hiring a service to spray trees for spider mites as they can use more effective chemicals.

Hyde County

What is wrong with Ray's apple tree?

This is apple scab, probably the most common foliage disease problem with apples and crabapples. Many of these trees across the state now are covered with leaves that have the characteristic dark olive blotches of the disease. There is no effective control at this time of year. Fungicides are applied when the buds are swelling in the spring and application made about every 10 days till early summer. The wet spring weather we experienced this year was almost ideal for the development of this disease.

Jackson County

Is this a sour cherry tree?

Close, the leaves are from a Nanking cherry (*Prunus tomentosa*), more of a tall shrub than a tree. The cherries are edible, rather sour, but excellent for jams and jellies.

Perkin County

Rabbit damage on juniper

This is a little unusual, we see far more vole damage on junipers than rabbits, but the markings and cuts on the sample are certainly due to bunnies. Once the stems and branches are turning brown they have been girdled enough to kill the tissue above the injury. I would prune out the damaged stems. Unfortunately, junipers do not sprout back as flowering shrubs do so there will be open spots in the plant that will remain there for many years.

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