

Pest Update (February 4, 2015)

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John Ball, Forest Health Specialist SD Department of Agriculture,
Extension Forester SD Cooperative Extension

Email: john.ball@sdsu.edu

Phone: office 605-688-4737, cell 605-695-2503

Samples sent to: John Ball
Plant Science Department
rm 230, Agricultural Hall, Box 2207A
South Dakota State University
Brookings, SD 57007-0996

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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Timely Topics



Bur oak has a number of pests but one of the more recent, and unusual, problems is a gall wasp. Gall wasps are not unusual on bur oaks, but there is a twist to this one. *Callirhytis flavipes* spends the winter just beneath the bark. The small, white larvae are found in the branches and twigs of mature oak trees and in the trunks of

young trees. The gall wasps emerge from the galls in the spring as adults and move to the newly formed leaves where they insert eggs into the midrib, the central vein of the leaf. Once the eggs hatch the larvae form a gall on the vein and live out their short lives within this structure. Adults emerge later in the season and lay eggs on the twigs and branches.



The galls formed by this gall wasp are not particularly harmful to the tree, no more than the many other galls that form on oaks. What makes this gall wasp a problem is the woodpeckers that feed on the larvae during the winter. The woodpeckers can shred most

of the bark from young trees, enough that the trees can be killed by this injury. I have seen belts of young oaks experience mortality as great as 50% from the woodpecker activity. The trees that are not killed by the woodpecker activity, often have the tops killed back enough that the trees become misshaped and of little value as a windbreak tree. The injury can be so extensive that many people are looking for another tree to plant in their windbreaks.



E-samples



I received a few pictures from Perkins County of deer injury on 6-year old ponderosa pines. This apparently is the winter for critter damage on trees as reports of deer, porcupines, rabbits, and squirrels continue to come in. Deer will browse on most any evergreen during the winter with arborvitae and pines being among their favorites. This browsing is often fatal to young pines as the loss of needles limits photosynthesis for the tree. In addition, the loss of terminal buds will restrict and distort shoot growth. Unfortunately there is not much that can be done once the damage occurs. However, if the browsing is limited to less than 1/3 of the tree it is probably best to wait till spring to see if it recovered. Most than 1/3, probably figure on replanting this spring.

Samples received/site visits



Minnehaha County **Why aren't the acorns falling from the tree?**

In this case they were not acorns but rough bullet oak galls. I have seen a lot of oaks infested with these galls and they are sometimes confused with acorns. The galls rarely harm the tree though it is possible to find twigs so covered with them, the shoot dies back. Unfortunately there is no effective control for gall wasps.

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