

Pest Update (September 16, 2015)

Vol. 13, no. 30

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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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Timely topics



Oak leaf blister (*Taphrina caerulescens*) pictures are still coming in from the Black Hills and mostly the southern Hills. As mentioned in last week's *Update*, the symptoms to oak leaf blister begin as small, blister-like bumps on the upper side of the leaf. There are gray depressions on the underside of the leaves beneath the blisters. The yellow blisters continue to enlarge and coalesce by mid to late summer. The blisters may turn gray towards the end of the season and the infected leaves often curl before dropping prematurely. As with many of the foliage disease, infection takes place in the spring as the leaves were beginning to open but the symptoms are not noticed until now when most of the leaves are affected. Some trees have already lost most of their leaves to the disease.

The disease is most common on members of the red oaks; black oak and northern red oak, but we see it every year on bur oaks in South Dakota. It is a fairly common disease. The disease is unsightly, but not a serious threat to the tree unless the tree is repeatedly defoliated. Usually we do not have the spring weather conditions, cool and wet, to cause two or three years of defoliation.



I am getting lots of calls and pictures regarding sap dripping from the tips of pine shoots. This is a picture that was sent to me from near Black Hawk of the pavement beneath a pine covered in sap. I have collected some shoots from pines in the Custer area that were also dripping sap and found that the tips were infested with a small **twig beetle**, *Pithyophthorus aquilus*. This beetle typically colonizes the tips of shoots on

pinus and often attacks trees already stressed by pine engraver beetles. However, I was able to find in what appeared to be healthy trees. The only indicator of their presence being sap dripping down from the infested trees. The infestations will probably result in some minor tip dieback but otherwise twig beetles are not considered serious threats to a tree's health. There is not much known about this twig beetle, it does not even have a common name other than the generic twig beetle which is given to most of the insects in this genus. The most well-known twig



beetle is *P juglandis*, the walnut twig beetle, which serves as a vector for the thousand cankers disease. The disease has not yet been detected in our state.

E-samples



Black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*) is beginning to drop its leaves. Black ash is one of the last trees to leaf out in the spring and one of the first to drop its leaves in the autumn. The leaf fall is particularly noticeable as many of black ash have their leaves infected by ash anthracnose. Black ash also have suffered from a decline of unknown cause that resulted in the loss of many of these trees on the Northern Plains several years ago. Drought was suspected as a possible agent

for the widespread loss of these trees. We also have periodic problems with a small psyllid (*Psyllopsis discrepan*) that causes distortions and premature defoliation. This appears to be nothing more than early leaf drop and anthracnose and the tree will probably leaf out just fine next spring.



I received pictures and samples of a webworm on cotoneaster. This is the leaf crumpler (*Acrobasis indigenella*) an insect I have been collecting in the region for about 30 years. This insect feeds on a wide range of Roseaceae shrubs and trees including apples and cherries but has seemed to find a “home” in hedge cotoneaster. The adult moths flew this summer and eggs hatched in mid-August. Now the young larvae are now beginning to form a case around

themselves for hibernation and resumes feeding in the spring. The silken case is probably what people are noticing as these “globs” of darkened dried leaves, silk and frass (insect poop) are hard to miss. The insect rarely removes enough leaves to harm the shrub. There is another insect, the true webworm, *A. raciella*, that is more of a problem on the Rockspray cotoneaster, a plant not common on the Northern Plains.

Samples received/site visits

Brown County

What is wrong with these cherries?

Who knows? The leaves were placed into a wet bag and by the time they arrived in Brookings, the samples were a degraded blob of mold. Never place a sample in a moist plastic bag! I will call.

Gregory County
The needles are falling.

What is wrong with this Norway spruce?

Norway spruce is susceptible to needlecast disease and there are signs of the disease in the sample that was submitted. I also suspect you are seeing some winterburn on these trees as Gregory County is a little too arid for this spruce and not one that does well there. The few I see in your area look a little worn. Needlecast disease can be treated with fungicide application in the spring as the needles are expanding and repeated for several times at two week intervals or so. I update the list of available fungicides each spring and the 2016 recommendations will be out before the trees need to be treated.

Minnehaha County

Bumps on oak foliage



When you get a call about bumps on oak leaves you know you will be looking at an oak gall formed by a cynipid wasp. There are lots of these wasps that colonize oaks and each has a unique gall (sometimes two as they can have a rather complex life cycle). Here was an interesting one in a bur oak in Sioux Falls, the clustered midrib oak gall (good name!) caused by a small wasp (*Adleria dimorpha*). It does not really harm the oak

Pennington County

Spider mites on spruce



Spruce spider mite is a cool season mite, meaning it is active in the spring and fall and dormant during the hot summer. However, the damage from their feeding activity, mottled yellow and bronze needles, really is not noticeable until July or August. If you look close at affected branches you can sometimes see very fine webbing and debris. Now is the time to treat for spruce spider mites as the adults become more active and are about to

lay eggs. Small trees can be treated with insecticides containing Neem to kill the adults. A horticultural oil can be applied in early April to kill the overwintering eggs, but remember an oil will turn a blue spruce green.

Walworth County

What is wrong with this crabapple?

The olive-drab spots and blotches on the leaves are the most common symptoms of apple scab, a fungal disease of the leaves (and occasionally the

fruit). The infection results in distorted and discolored leaves that begin to fall in August. The disease does not kill the tree but infected trees do look unsightly by this time of year.

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This publication made possible through a grant from the USDA Forest Service.