

Pest Update (Oct 2-9, 2013)

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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/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 product identified in this publication.

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Timely Topics

An early season snowstorm has caused widespread tree mortality and branch breakage throughout the Black Hills. The damage was particularly severe since the leaves were still on

the deciduous trees and this helped the snow to accumulate on the branches. Many trees, especially ones that had poorly structured canopies containing competing leaders and acute branch angle, had their limbs snap under the load rather than bend. The focus now is the removal of the trees that have fallen as well as determining whether a damaged tree is even worth saving.



The tree damage in the Rapid City to Spearfish area appears to be even more severe than the damage that occurred following the ice storm last spring in Sioux Falls. While the focus there was ice more than snow, the information in the publication created as a response to that storm still applies and the link is below.

<http://igrow.org/up/resources/06-1001-2013.pdf>

Tree owners faced with pruning or removing mature trees should hire professionals to perform these high-risk tasks. However, not everyone who knocks on your door offering these services is a professional. Hiring local trees companies, even if it means a longer wait, is generally the best option. These companies have been in business for years and will be here long after the storm clean-up is over and the other companies have left. Regardless of who is hired be sure they have the proper insurance (worker compensation and general liability) otherwise you, the tree owner may be financially responsible for paying for any injuries that occur on your property. Also be sure the company has employed arborists certified by either the South Dakota Arborist Association or the International Society of Arboriculture. Certified arborists have passed an exam that covers proper pruning and repair techniques as well as safe work practices. And finally, NEVER let someone start to work on your trees without a written quote – there were a number of tree owners in Sioux Falls last April who let a company do pruning and removals in their yard only to be handed a bill that is 5 to 7 times more expensive than the work would normally be billed. Tree owners should expect to pay extra for the snow storm clean-up due to the complexity and higher risk to this work but almost have the quote in writing before work begins.



I received a nice picture of the annual needle shedding of pine from Dave, a service forester with the South Dakota Department of Agriculture. As mentioned in the *Update* two weeks ago, if you notice the three-year old needles on a pine turning yellow at this time of year, don't worry its normal. Evergreen does not mean "forever green" and pines shed their older, interior needles at this time of year. Spruces do this as well but for them it is the five- to seven-year old needles that are shed and the color change is not nearly as noticeable.



The first annual wood utilization workshop is coming up this Saturday, October 12 in Brookings South Dakota. The workshop “*You should see what we saw*” will include demonstrations of portable mills, CNC machines, and solar kilns among others. The objective of this first workshop is to show the potential value of wood in South Dakota and the value of turning our over-mature trees in urban and windbreaks into valuable products when the time comes

for removal rather than the common practice of merely cutting and burning or burying the wood. The workshop will be held “rain or shine” at the N.E. Hansen Farm, just east of the I-29, 14 By-pass intersections (exit 133). The workshop will begin at 9:30 am and conclude about noon. There is no charge to attend.

E-samples



I received another e-sample of horntails, wood wasps, this past week.

As mentioned in the last *Update*, these insect are a large group of wasp-like insects that are woodborer during the larval stage. The name horntail comes from the long spear that occurs on the last abdomen segment. The “tail” is not for stinging but as an ovipositor (egg laying) to lay the eggs beneath the bark of the tree. The adults are attracted to dead or dying

trees for egg laying and the eggs deposited as deep as a ½ inch or more beneath the bark hatch in about 3 to 4 weeks. The larvae feed in the sapwood and heartwood of the tree for several years during which time they construct long tunnels packed with a sawdust-like material. After several years the larvae become a pupa with the adults emerging in August and September.



I also received a picture of an Asian pear. The Harbin or Ussurian pear (*Pyrus ussuriensis*) has been planted in South Dakota for a century or more and these trees can be found in towns and windbreaks throughout the state. The pears do not resemble the pears you buy in the store either by shape or taste. The Harbin pears are greenish yellow, round and are often only a little more than an inch around. The fruit can be gritty; taste like it has been rolling on the beach for a while, though there are many folks that make a nice jam out of them. They are not a favorite with the birds.

Samples received

Pennington County
canopy dying back.

This birch tree has the upper

Dieback can be due to a number of stressors but one of the most common in the Black Hills is the bronze birch borer. This close relative to the emerald ash borer is a native insect to the state but instead of attacking ash, the birch borer as the name implies attacks birch. The two insects make a similar exit hole, D-shaped, and you should find these holes in the dead canopy. Bronze birch borer can be managed with a trunk insecticide spray made in May or with a soil insecticide drench made in the fall. However these are most effective when the tree has less than 1/3 of the canopy dead. This tree appears to have almost half the canopy killed so it may continue to decline regardless of treatments.

Pennington County
What might be the problem?

This is a declining spruce.

I have received numerous samples from spruce trees this year and the most common reason for the decline of these trees is the drought that occurred from 2011 through 2012. Spruces have preformed growth, so the growing conditions during a year affect the growth the following year. The current shoot growth and needle length on this sample is much smaller than normal which indicates that the growing conditions last year were not ideal. The sample also has cytospora canker. The beginning cankers often show little resin flow, almost resemble hail damage, and this fungal disease is common on stressed spruce. The best treatment is to remove any dead lower branches and water the trees during dry spells (which certainly is not occurring now).