

# Pest Update (December 16-23, 2015)

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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

**Oh Deer! I always several calls at this time of year asking what trees and shrubs are “deer proof.”** There are no such plants, of course. If preferred food sources are not available, deer will sometimes eat almost anything, or at least nibble on it. I am willing to bet if you show this list to anyone in Rapid City, where there is very heavy deer pressure, there are at least several plants listed that probably someone has had eaten to the ground! With that said, here is the list of *rarely* eaten plants:

*Alnus glutinosa* – European alder  
*Berberis thunbergii* – Japanese barberry  
*Betula nigra* – river birch  
*Buxus micophylla* – Korean boxwood  
*Caragana arborescens* - Siberian peashrub  
*Catalpa speciosa* – northern catalpa  
*Cotinus coggygria* – smoketree  
*Cotoneaster* - cotoneaster  
*Forsythia* - forsythia  
*Ginkgo biloba* - ginkgo  
*Gledistia triacanthos* – honeylocust  
*Juniperus* – creeping and common juniper  
*Ostrya virginiana* – ironwood or also known as hophornbeam  
*Philadelphus coronaries* – sweet mockorange  
*Picea* – spruce  
*Platanus occidentalis* – sycamore  
*Potentilla fruticosa* – potentilla  
*Robina pseudoacacia* – black locust  
*Sambucus* - elderberry  
*Spiraea* – spirea (some browsing expected)  
*Sumac* - sumac  
*Syringa* – lilacs  
*Viburnum* – viburnums

Again, this is not a perfect list. Deer can, and will, rub on almost any plant and some of these plants such as lilacs and viburnums are considered “deer proof” but are foods for rabbits! In addition, some of these plants, such as sycamore and redbud, have limited hardiness.

### **Go Away Deer!**

Another approach, or used in combination, is to treat the plant or yard with a repellent. First, the amount of repellent needed is directly proportional to the deer’s preference of the plant being protected. Plants that deer prefer are going to require more repellent for protection than those that are not their favorites. Repellents work through a number of mechanisms, with most commonly grouped as odor-based and taste-based. Generally speaking, odor-based repellents work better than taste-based repellents (and taste-based don’t work until they take a bite). Soaps are a common choice for an odor-based repellent but be careful what soap you use! Soaps containing coconut oil might actually be an attractant and the fragrance of the bar has little to do with its effectiveness. Soaps that contained the rendered fat of animals (tallow) seem to work the best, but even then the “bubble” of protection can be quite small. Deer may browse within a couple of feet of a hanging soap bar so you might go through more than a few bars of soap to protect a small fruit tree. Eggs, rotted eggs, are another odor-

based repellent that can work on deer (and unwanted house guests). Many of the commercial odor-based products have putrescent whole eggs as their active ingredient. If you want to try making your own, mix in six raw eggs (and a little liquid soap) into a gallon of water. Stir, then strain before spraying. This will wear off so you may need to reapply every few weeks during the winter.

### The “Charlie Brown” tree that deserves more use!



**Siberian larch** (*Larix sibirica*) is the hardiest tree we can grow in South Dakota as it is adapted to Zone 1! I think it is a great tree that should be planted more but unfortunately is rarely seen in our windbreaks. Its problem? It is a deciduous conifer meaning it drops its needles each fall so yes it does look like a dead spruce all winter. However, the yellow autumn color and the bright green needles that flush out in the spring more than compensate for the winter’s bare appearance. While larches are not noted for their drought tolerance, Siberian larch is adapted to slightly drier conditions than many other conifers and it will grow on alkaline soils. The growth rate is about 1.5 feet a year, depending on the site. The mature height is about 40 feet and its

form is a narrow pyramid. The only negative that I have seen is it is reported to be a little touchy to establish bare-root plantings through container planting seems to have no problems. However, the problem may not be the planting method as much as the seed source. There is considerable variation in adaptation to the Northern Plains among seed sources and it is best to plant sources that have proven adapted to our region rather than assuming any Siberian larch will survive.

### E-samples



We received one “critter” sample, an insect that appears to be a **leaf-footed bug** (the name comes from the flattened, leaf-like flare to the back legs. These insects (Hemiptera: Coreidae) feed on fruits and seeds of a wide range of plants including conifers. They prefer the warmth of a home during the winter and can be found walking on the windows during sunny days. They are not a threat in the home but can be somewhat of a

nuisance. They can be collected and thrown outside to find another home (or freeze). However, they can emit a foul odor when crushed so “catch and release” not crush.

## Samples received/site visits

Lincoln County

### Do these Scotch pines have pine wilt disease?

Pine wilt disease is the most serious disease of exotic pines and has almost eliminated the use of Scotch pine in Nebraska and other states to the south and east. The disease also results in significant mortality to Austrian pine and we occasionally see it in mugo pine. The most common symptom pattern in Scotch pine is the tree appears fine in the spring but by mid to late summer the foliage turns from green to yellow to gray, but the needles remain hanging from the branch. The symptoms sometimes start at the top of the tree and progress



downward but other times it seems to appear throughout the tree at once. Generally the tree dies the same year the symptoms first appear. A key agent in the disease is a small roundworm called the pine wilt nematode. The nematode was detected in two of the four samples submitted: the tree in the yard and the other by the corner of the field. The other two samples have yield nematodes, but not this particular species.

*Happy New Year everyone! The next Update will appear in January.*

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