

# Pest Update (September 28, 2016)

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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.

### 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

I am still receiving lots of calls and pictures of “dying” pine trees in the last week. The symptoms are all the same – a sudden appearance of yellowing needles towards the center of the tree. This is just the

annual shedding of the third year needles, an event that usually occurs unnoticed. Why the alarm this year? During sunny, dry late summers, the older needles quickly turn a straw yellow and line the interior of the tree.



**Fall color is occurring on arborvitae along with the other evergreens.** Pines and spruce have their older needles turn yellow (or sometimes brown) before falling. Usually this normal fall needle drop is easy to tell as it is the interior needles that are coloring and dropping. Arborvitae normally have the yellowing occurs a random spots, almost ribbons, of yellowing foliage throughout the entire plant. I have

received several samples of normal foliage color change on arborvitae from concerned homeowners wondering if their tree is diseased. This is normal.



**Acorns are beginning to litter the ground beneath the bur oaks in our state** (and the occasional red oak as shown in the picture) so it's not too surprising if some folks wonder if they can start a tree from them. Actually it is fairly easy to do. First collect the acorns from the ground, not from the tree. They are not usually mature until they fall. However, do not wait too long to gather them as you

have a lot of competition from squirrels and birds. Next examine the gathered acorns and discard any that have small holes (indication of weevil damage) or obvious decay. Place the ones that pass this test into a bucket of water and discard any that float to the top. The ones that are left have a good chance of germinating.



If you have collect bur oaks, plant them out immediately into some nice garden soil. Bur oaks, as with many members of the white oak group, begin their germination process in the warm fall soils. The acorns should be planted at a depth of about three times their diameter and I recommend placing some chicken wire over the acorns to keep the squirrels from digging them up. Water the soil and add a thin layer of mulch or straw. Red oaks, and other members of the red oak group such as pin oak, need to go through a cold treatment first so dry these remaining acorns with a paper towel seal them into a plastic bag and place them in the refrigerator. Plant these out into good garden soil next spring.

If you collect good acorns and follow these instructions you might achieve a 30 percent germination rate, meaning 3 trees from every 10 acorns planted.

## E-samples



**“It is raining worms from my ash tree”** I have had e-samples from people wondering about insects “raining” down from their ash trees and filling the gutters and driveway cracks as seen in this picture sent in by Aaron, the City Forester in Aberdeen). The small white legless larvae people are finding beneath their ash trees are the **ash seed weevils** (*Lignyodes bischoffi*). These are insects that spent their larval stage feeding inside of ash seeds during late summer. Usually you cannot find anything distinguishing about infested seeds. The only clue the seed was infested is a small hole where the larvae emerged. The larvae

emerge from the seed in the fall while the seed is still hanging on the tree hence the “raining” of insects. Once the larva is on the ground it overwinters either in the soil or the litter layer. Pupation occurs in the spring and the adult weevil emerges in mid-summer with the females laying eggs on the newly-formed seeds. Once the larvae hatch they hollow out the seeds as they feed. There is one generation per year and no treatment is recommended or needed.



**Willow sawfly (*Nematus ventralis*) are out feeding on leaves at this time.** This is a common sawfly of willows and has two generations per year. The first occurs in the first occurs in the spring and the second in late summer with the larvae feeding during August and September. These large (about ½ inch) black with yellow spot larvae feed in clusters along the edges of the leaves and will all curl in unison if disturbed. They can defoliate a tree in

a few weeks though willows can usually recover from this injury quickly.

## Samples received/site visits

Clay County

**What is attacking this ash?**

This is the redheaded ash borer, a common borer of dying (or dead) ash. It creates serpentine galleries on the sapwood so is sometimes confused with the emerald ash borer (which has not yet been detected in South Dakota). The larvae are quite different so your sample made for an easy identification. There

are no controls for the insect, it is more an indication that the tree is dying rather than being the reason the tree is dying.

Minnehaha County

### **What is wrong with this honeylocust?**

It took a site visit to be sure but the tree has thyronectria canker. Trees infected with this disease often produce yellowing foliage that falls prematurely (though these symptoms can also be associated with mites and a number of other pests) and the branches and trunk will have slightly sunken cankers that often have a reddish stain to them. The disease often gets its start in the branch union where they attach to the trunk. There is not much that can be done to manage this disease and it seems to be more of a problem the further west honeylocust is planted in the state, most likely due to the harsher growing conditions increasing susceptibility to the disease.

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