

Pest Update (May 3, 2018)

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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 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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Plant Development

Finally, spring has arrived, about a month late. The forsythias are blooming in Brookings this week. The bright yellow flowers are one of the first floral displays in the spring. Last year and the year before these were beginning to bloom at the end of March, about five weeks earlier!

Timely Topics



Emerald ash borer update. A recent article in the *Rapid City Journal* raised a lot of concern about emerald ash borer. My phone has been ringing most of the week with people wanting to know if they should cut their ash tree down or start injecting as the insect threat is 'looming'.

Most of the article is factual and yes, emerald ash borer will eventually arrive in Rapid City and when it does it will kill every ash that is not being treated with insecticides. However, it could arrive in Rapid City this year or twenty years from now so while it's a concern, the barbarians are not at the gate just yet.

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and the South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service do not recommend treating for emerald ash borer until the insect has been confirmed within 15 miles of your tree. Unlike mountain pine beetle treatments where they had to be applied to protect the tree from attack, emerald ash borer treatments can be used to eliminate a borer infestation already in the tree. There is no need to begin preventative trees just to be safe.



As far as the thought to remove existing ash, that is a personal choice. If you have a 10 to 20-year old ash it might make sense to remove it and plant another tree in its place. If the tree is older and is an asset to your yard it might be better to keep it and just plan on treating the tree (typical cost \$150 to \$200 a year every other year) once the beetle arrives in your area.

The most important point in the article was the last comment by Andy Bernard, the City Forester for Rapid City, *don't plant ash, pick another tree*. No one in Rapid City or any other South Dakota community should be planting ash trees – its just creating a future headache.

E-samples

Squirrels or porcupine damage? I received some pictures of an apple tree that had the bark chewed off on the branches and trunk about 10 to 20 feet off the ground. Once the bark is removed from around the tree about 2/3s the circumference or more, the chances of the surviving is low. There has been too much disruption of the tissue that transports the food manufactured by the leaves



from reaching the roots. Once the roots starve, they begin to die so water is not transported back to the leaves and the tree dies. Sometimes the tree survives into the summer, but once hot weather arrives, it wilts and dies. This tree is a goner.

The question was; who did this? Rabbits, mice, and voles chew on bark, but their damage is at ground level or to the height of the winter snow. Squirrels and porcupines both de-bark trees higher in the canopy. The way to tell their damage apart is to look at the size of the tooth marks left in the wood. Squirrels have incisors less than 1/16 inches, for porcupine's they are about 2-3 times larger. These appear to be small bites, so I am leaning towards squirrels

being the culprit.

Sycamore anthracnose (*Apiognomonia veneta*). This is a common fungal disease in the East where there is more American sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) and the climate is humid. I do not see much of either in South Dakota. We do not have many sycamore trees outside the extreme southeastern part of the state nor do we see as much anthracnose.



The disease results in large patches of the leaf turning brown and dying with the entire leaf eventually turning brown and falling. I have seen the ground beneath an infected sycamore littered with leaves by mid-August. The disease also causes twig and branch cankers, so the canopy of an infected tree becomes covered with small shoots arising from the base of these dead tips.

There are treatments for the disease. Most involve injecting a fungicide into the trunk – like how Dutch elm disease is managed. However, since the disease rarely kills the sycamore, just makes them a little messier with the falling twigs and leaves, most tree owners just live with it.

Samples received/Site visits

Charles Mix County

Is this emerald ash borer?



This was a reasonable question. There two ash trees had the bark pecked away from the trunk in a few places – called blanding. The trunks also had numerous woodpecker pecks where the birds were searching for insects.

One of the best means of identifying ash trees infested by emerald ash borer is to look for extensive woodpecker damage along the trunk of the tree. However, our native redheaded borer (*Neoclytus acuminatus*) and banded ash borer (*N. caprea*) will occasionally have woodpeckers search for them. I have seen trees infested by these native insects have patches of bark removed as the birds search for these insects. However, I rarely see them peck away most of

the bark but that is common with trees infested by emerald ash borer.

I stopped by the home to look at the tree and there were numerous round to oval holes on the trunk. These are not the crisp D-shaped holes created by the emerald ash borer as it emerges but instead the typical holes made by the redheaded and banded ash borer.



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