

Pest Update (September 30, 2020)

Vol. 18, no. 34

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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, 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 as 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 for the growing season



The weather is turning cooler again but is still sunny and dry. The leaves are falling from our broadleaf trees, but they are also falling from our evergreens. Evergreen does not mean forever green and conifers do lose their older needles in the fall. I am still receiving calls and pictures from concern owners of pines about the bright yellow needles. Some have been told this is mite damage and they need to spray. No, this is just a normal fall occurrence that is more

noticeable this year due to the dry weather causing the needles to turn yellow rather than brown before falling.

Timely Topics

Emerald ash borer update



Emerald ash borer (EAB) sampling continues in Sioux Falls and Canton. Most of the larvae are 3rd instar, but there are a few more 4th instars every week. The mature larvae are also more than 1 inch long now. Most of these larvae are either mature or are maturing and will form pupae in the spring, becoming adults in early June. However, we still find some 2nd instars. These may spend all next summer as larvae and emerge the following year.

Ash removals continue



Tree owners in Sioux Falls, Canton and other communities are taking advantage of the warm, dry weather and scheduling tree companies to remove their unwanted ash trees. Most of this activity is concentrated in southeastern South Dakota where the beetle is either confirmed or is anticipated to arrive within the next few years.

Unless someone is committed to treating an ash tree on the insect is confirmed in their community (or within 15 miles of it), cutting down the tree now makes good sense. The tree will be lost to the beetle eventually – sometime within the next two to 20

years – and removing the tree now means a better choice can be planted to provide a lifetime of shade and beauty. Why wait?

A clarification to the article on cranberrybush viburnum in the September 9th issue of the Update

I had a short article on the cranberrybush viburnum, *Viburnum opulus*, and mentioned it was native to South Dakota as well as northern North America and Europe (also Asia and even north Africa). I receive an email from a noted botanist saying I should have said *Viburnum opulus* var *trilobum* is native to South Dakota. He is correct and I should have been more specific and named the variety in the article.

The cranberrybush viburnum was once two species, the European cranberrybush viburnum (*V. opulus*) and the American cranberrybush viburnum (*V. trilobum*) and this is the way I learned them. They are now considered two varieties of the same species, the European *V. opulus* var *opulus* and the American *V. opulus* var *trilobum* (though some have changed this to *V. opulus* var *americanum* just to add to the confusion).

There are some slight differences between the two – the shape of the petiole glands as an example – as well as the flavor of the fruit. The American is considered the better of the two for eating as the European variety is bitter (considered inedible!). The European variety has naturalized in North America and in some areas out East it is more common than the native variety.

E-samples

Silver maple or white poplar?



A white poplar leaf.

A common question is from tree owners wanting to know if they have a silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) or a white poplar (*Populus alba*). These two trees are common in landscapes across the state. While both are noted for their fast growth, the white poplar is the least desirable of the two due to its proliferate suckering. A thick stand of poplars will come up around 'mom' if the ground is left undisturbed with a thicket often extending out a distance at least equal to mom's height.

The tree is not without its admirers as it is tough. If you want to grow a tree out West, this is it. But I have seen entire streets taken over by groves of this tree in abandon West River towns. Think of

them as the arboreal equivalent of the pod people in films.

Both tree can produce a 5-lobed leaf so the foliage can appear similar. The best way to tell a silver maple from a white poplar is look at the arrangement of the leave on a shoot. The leaves will alternate along the shoot in a white poplar. The leaves will be in pairs, opposite one another along the shoot for silver maple. Another easy way to separate them is the underside:the silver maple leaf is a silvery white while the white poplar is white tomentose, almost like powder sugar on a donut.

White dots on an aspen: poplar scale



This picture shows what is most likely the light gray to white, round-shaped poplar scale (*Quadraspidiotus gigas*) also known as the willow or aspen scale. This is like the oystershell scale (*Lepidosaphes ulmi*), another armored scale but the oystershell scale is more elongated and is light to dark brown. Since they are both armored scale, they form a hard, waxy shell and do not produce the sticky honeydew that is common

with soft scales. The feeding and treatments are identical for the two.

The poplar scale is a sucking insect that feeds on the living cells in the trunk and branches of the host tree. The feeding can produce a bubbling appearance to the otherwise smooth bark of an aspen. Infestations of this scale have been associated with decline in aspens and even occasional death. The most effective treatment with the least impact on beneficial insects is the insect growth regulator pyriproxifen. Products containing pyriproxifen are available to commercial applicators and can be used next summer when this insect is in the mobile, crawler stage. The biggest difference between these two scales is the treatment time so I am going to get a sample to be certain of the ID.

What is this caterpillar?



Some e-samples come through electrons moving a little farther than our South Dakota border. This one is from Pennsylvania and shows a caterpillar feeding on salvia. This is the tobacco budworm (*Chloridea virescens syn Heliiothis virescens*). Another name is geranium budworm as it is commonly found on geraniums and nicotiana in flower gardens. The caterpillars with their many color forms, are common in the fall feeding on the flower buds. They are

occasionally found in Minnesota and eastern South Dakota but do not survive our

cold winters. The adult moths sometimes catch upper air current coming north and hitchhike into our state for a summer visit.

Samples received/Site visit

Codington County

Several 8-foot tall spruce planted with a tree spade this spring have died. What might be the problem?



The shoot growth this year has a “bottlebrush” appearance, short needles on a stunted shoot tip. This is a common symptom with transplant shock and most likely the trees died from the stress associated with the move. I do not know the size of the spade, hopefully at least a 66-inch, but too small of a spade might have contributed to the decline. A 44-inch spade is sometime used for this size of evergreen, it can easily lift them, but the roots are

severed too close to the trunk.

There is not much that can be done for transplant shock at this time other than water and apply a 4-to 6-inch thick layer of a shredded bark mulch around the trees out at least a 3-foot radius

Minnehaha County

Should I remove this tree?



Another call on the stability of a tree! This was an easy one. It is a Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*) leaning toward a shed and power lines. About a third of the base is completely rotted out so there are very few roots still supporting the tree.

The roots were cut about twenty years ago when the shed was constructed and now the tree is having its revenge. Unfortunately, you can do almost anything wrong to a tree and it

will survive for a while, or even a few decades, but eventually decay will catch up and cause the tree to fall.

Union County

What is wrong with this bush?

This is a hedge of hedge cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster lucida*) with scattered plants presenting dieback (with blacken, dropping leaves). This appearance is most likely due to the bacterial disease fireblight. This is a very common problem with hedge cotoneaster and the best treatment is to prune the hedge within 3 inches of the

ground during the winter. This usually eliminates the infection and the plants recover.

Reviewed by Master Gardeners Dawnee Lebeau, Carrie Moore, and Bess Pallares

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