Cooperative Extension

ORNAMENTALS

• H O T L I N E •

July 21, 2017 Issue 18

INSECTS

Brian Kunkel
Ornamental IPM Specialist

FLATIDS are true bugs in the super-family of Fulgoroidea, and is also known as a type of plant hopper. This spring and summer we have had sufficient rainfall for plants in the landscape; thus, good growing opportunities for the plants. This insect group seems to be more abundant during seasons with ample rainfall. Some other insects in this large super-family are delphacids, torpedo bugs, *Nephesini*, and *Flatormenis*.

The immature insects frequently feed on the stems of many different ornamental plants such as roses, cone flowers, hosta flowering stalks, willows, phlox, mondarda, weigela and many others. The insect may not be readily seen because of the wax it produces as part of the excrement. The insect nestles itself among the wax layered around the stem and feeds until disturbed. The plant hopper will jump away if a visually-oriented predator approaches, or if a person gets too close. The insect returns to about the same place to feed when the threat leaves or it feels safe. This insect does little harm to the overall health of the host plant, but the resultant wax from its feeding may appear unsightly. I am unaware of any evidence that suggests flatids vector viruses or diseases to their hosts.

Treatments for this insect are not warranted because it rarely causes significant stress or health issues for the plant. However, if a client wishes to have plants treated; then, insecticidal soap, a pyrethroid, acephate, carbaryl (sevin), or a neonicotinoid will provide the control desired. Insecticidal soap sprays need contact with the insect to have efficacy, and this may be difficult due to the waxes it has produced around itself.

DISEASES

Nancy Gregory
Plant Diagnostician

BROWN PATCH is showing up in turfgrass lawns now. Brown patch caused by the fungus *Rhizoctonia* is problematic as we get into very warm weather with warm temperatures overnight. Brown patch symptoms include irregular circular patches that are brown or tan in color and appear flattened. Individual lesions on blades are tan with a darker border. Fescues, bluegrass, rye and bentgrass are all susceptible, although there are a few resistant varieties available. Avoid water late in the day, which can be difficult with afternoon thunderstorms. Avoid high nitrogen fertilizer after early spring applications. *Rhizoctonia* will not kill the crown and roots, but can cause severe dieback in foliage. The turf should come back when conditions improve for growth of cool season turf grasses. Preventative fungicide applications may be necessary on high value sites. Azoxystrobin or pyraclostrobin

(Continued)

What's Hot!

Bacterial leaf spot is common on home garden tomatoes and peppers, and is favored by frequent rains and high humidity. Pick off worst affected leaves and try to avoid overhead water on plants. Sprays of copper can help to manage in larger plantings.

Flatid planthopper adult. Photo credit: David Cappaert, bugwood.org UGA5343024

Brown patch on fescue. Photo credit: R. Mulrooney

For more information on pests & practices covered in this newsletter, call your County Extension Office

Helpful numbers to know:

Garden Line (for home gardeners only)	831-8862
New Castle County Extension	831-2506
Kent County Extension	730-4000
Sussex County Extension	856-7303

View more pictures at http://extension.udel.edu/ornamentals/archive/

Diseases (Continued)

products, mixed with other chemistries or rotated with other products can be used. Rotation of chemistries helps to avoid resistance development. We are also seeing dollar spot on some turf.

SOOTY MOLD is one of those things that we tell you not to worry about, but what is it? Sooty mold is caused by one of several species of *saprophytic* fungi, resulting in a black unsightly growth on trees and shrubs, mostly leaves. It does not directly harm the plant but could reduce its ability to photosynthesize. Sooty mold is often found on plants infested with sap sucking insects such as aphids, white flies, leafhoppers, mealybugs, or soft scales—all of which excrete honeydew (excrement high in sugars). Honeydew provides a nutritious source of food for the mold to grow. Washing of specimen plants with warm soapy water will only temporarily control the issue. In order to properly prevent regrowth, the insect that is feeding on the plant has to be identified and treated effectively, ultimately resulting in long-term control.

Sooty mold on white pine. Photo credit: N. Gregory

Editor: Susan Barton
Extension Horticulturist

GROWING DEGREE DAYS

AS OF July 18, 2017

- Swarthmore College (Delaware County, PA) = 1788 ('16 =NA)
- Fischer Greenhouse (New Castle County) = 1798 ('16 = 1719)
- Research & Educ. Center, Georgetown (Sussex County) = 2034 ('16 = 1805)

Northern flatid nymph and waxy section it just left.
Photo credit: David Cappaert, bugwood.org