

# ORNAMENTALS

• H O T L I N E •

September 11, 2015

Issue 24

## INSECTS

Brian Kunkel  
Ornamental IPM Specialist

**SPRUCE SPIDER MITES:** The latest hot spell this week is supposed to cool at the end of the week and possibly provide some rain. Daily temperatures should become more autumn-like over the next couple weeks; consequently, spruce spider mite and southern red mite activity will increase. Scout host trees and shrubs showing damage soon.

Spruce spider mites feed on fir, arborvitae, spruce, Douglas-fir, and other conifers. The mites feed on older foliage first. Spruce spider mites are olive - dark red with reddish-yellow legs and under a microscope two reddish eye spots can be seen along with a pale stripe down the back. Their eggs are orange with ridges along the sides of the sphere and have a "thread" at their top. Their entire life-cycle may take only 12-19 days in optimum conditions. Spruce spider mites nymphs start feeding in the fall around 2301 - 3957 [3094 peak] and mature to adults, which feed from 2694 - 3957 [3143 peak] GDD50. These GDD50 numbers are based on a 14 year study conducted by the SE PA-UDEL IPM group in the 1990s. Our range and peak for fall mite activity for nymphs may be slightly later than previously documented because of our hot weather into September; thus the need for scouting. Mite feeding usually continues until there is a hard frost. In the summer, damage appears as bleaching, yellowing, stippling or bronzing of the needles. Damage viewed on trees during the summer is often from intensive feeding in the fall.

(Continued)

## DISEASES

Nancy Gregory  
Plant Diagnostician

**PREMATURE LEAF DROP** is prevalent in the landscape due to dry weather. Plants are drought damaged by leaf desiccation, or by slowing of photosynthesis and slowing of growth. Leaves wilt or roll, turn off-color, and drop. Conifer needles drop and even current season needles may turn yellow, then brown, and are smaller. Plants in the first three years of establishment (root development) are the most susceptible to extremes in water, including too much or too little water. Drought stress predisposes plants to insects and disease. Examples of plants that do not tolerate drought include sycamore, tulip poplar, horse chestnut, sweet gum, Prunus, dogwood, maple, azalea, rhododendron, ash, pine, hemlock, Skimmia, Stewartia, Franklinia, and ground covers such as ivy and Lamium. For sites that are known to dry out, options for more drought tolerant types include abelia, bayberry, birch, Malus, Amelanchier, Ginkgo, holly, lilac, some maples, ironwood, and white oak. Drought resistant conifers include Eastern red cedar, most junipers, Japanese black pine, mugo pine, Norway spruce, Colorado blue spruce and Taxus.

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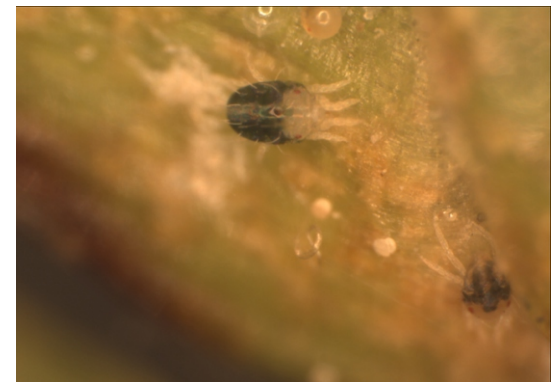
## What's Hot!

The UDBG Friends Fall Plant Sale is coming up next weekend. This sale is primarily perennials, but a few shrubs and tenders/house plants are available as well. Here is the complete availability list: [http://ag.udel.edu/udbg/events/documents/2015FPS\\_All\\_Plants\\_WEB.pdf](http://ag.udel.edu/udbg/events/documents/2015FPS_All_Plants_WEB.pdf)

Sept. 17th, 4:00-7:00 (Members only)  
Sept. 18th, 4:00-7:00 (General Public)  
Sept. 19th, 9:00-3:00 (General Public)

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There are only 2 more issues of Hotline for 2015, so we will be taking a break for a week. We will publish one more issue in September and a final issue in October.



Spruce spider mite. Photo credit: Brian Kunkel

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://sites.udel.edu/ornamentals/>

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE ■ COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

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## Diseases (Continued)

SPHAEROPSIS TIP BLIGHT (also known as Diplodia tip blight) affects Austrian pines (*Pinus nigra*), Scotch pine (*P. sylvestris*), ponderosa pine (*P. ponderosa*), Japanese black pine (*P. thunbergii*) and mugo pine (*P. mugo*). The disease occurs most often in well-established plantings, and trees over 20 years old. Trees with chronic drought stress, winter injury or mechanical injury may be predisposed. Fungal fruiting bodies can be seen on branch tips and on cones. Little can be done for control, except sanitation or pruning of dead branches and reducing stress on trees. Fungicides such as myclobutanil may be warranted for use on specimen trees.



Sphaeropsis tip blight. Photo credit: Bob Mulrooney

## Insects (Continued)

Monitor for the mites using a clipboard and a white sheet of paper. The mites will be the size of the period. Watch for predatory mites and small lady beetles; both are predators of the spruce spider mite and should be conserved. Miticides available for control include hexythiazox (Hexygon, Savy), bifenthrin (Floramite), abamectin (Avid), spiromesifin (Forbid) and others. Broad spectrum insecticides such as bifenthrin (Talstar) can cause mite 'resurgences' because natural enemies are killed; thus mite eggs are able to hatch without threat of predators.

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Editor: Susan Barton  
Extension Horticulturist

**GROWING  
DEGREE DAYS**  
AS OF September 8, 2015

- Swarthmore College  
(Delaware County, PA) NA = ('14 = 2832)
- Fischer Greenhouse  
(New Castle County) = 3113 ('14 = 2820)
- Research & Educ. Center, Georgetown  
(Sussex County) = 3207 ('14 = 2780)