

ORNAMENTALS

• H O T L I N E •

September 16, 2016

Issue 25

INSECTS

Brian Kunkel
Ornamental IPM Specialist

MILKWEED BUGS and OLEANDER APHIDS are two other insects beside monarch caterpillars that feed on milkweed. Recently, I received management requests for these two insects because the homeowner, business or park is concerned about having enough food for the monarch caterpillars. Both of these insects feed with piercing and sucking mouthparts; whereas, monarch caterpillars have chewing mouth parts. Management is rarely warranted.

Milkweed bugs are bright reddish-orange with black markings, and feed on the seeds of milkweed plants. They sequester the cardiac glycosides contained within the plants, and their aposematic coloration warns potential predators. Eggs take about four days to hatch, and each of the five nymph stages last about six days. Adults will live around another month.

Oleander aphids, sometimes called milkweed aphids, are yellow and black, and also sequester cardiac glycosides; thus some spiders are reluctant to eat this aphid. Other generalist predators and parasitoids are still able to utilize the aphids as a food source or host. Cultural control includes reduced fertilization, reduced watering, and reduced pruning of foliage to reduce the amount of tender growth preferred by aphids. Insecticidal soap is often the product of choice if chemicals are used because of concern for monarch butterflies.

DISEASES

Nancy Gregory
Plant Diagnostician

BOXWOOD BLIGHT caused by the fungus *Calonectria pseudonaviculata* was found in the U.S. for the first time in 2011. The disease has been detected (and plants destroyed) a few times in retail nursery stock in Delaware, but it is not established in Delaware landscapes. Diagnosis of boxwood blight requires microscopic examination. Contact DE Dept. of Ag or UD Plant Diagnostic Clinic if you suspect boxwood blight.

SOUTHERN BLIGHT, caused by the fungus *Sclerotium rolfsii*, affects a very range of hosts, and has been identified this season on *Pachysandra procumbens*, *Penstemon*, *Asclepias*, and annuals such as zinnia. Symptoms include wilt and dieback. The fungus does not produce air-borne spores but produces small, brown, round, resistant structures called sclerotia, which can survive harsh environmental conditions in soil and debris, and over winter to infect new plantings. The pathogen is brought in on new plantings and plants shared between garden clubs and friends. Remove affected plants and discard in the trash, do not compost.

(Continued)

What's Hot!

Bacterial leaf scorch hosts other than oak include: maple, elm, sycamore, London plane tree, mulberry, and dogwood, along with perennials such as blackberry, sumac, and grape.



Milkweed bug. Photo credit: B. Kunkel



Boxwood blight. Photo credit: N. Gregory

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/>

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Diseases (Continued)

Management includes sanitation, and there may be some benefits to biological control organisms such as *Trichoderma harzianum*. The best control is to start clean and stay clean.

ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS is widespread on turfgrass and many ornamentals. Hot, dry weather is not favorable for our cool season turf grasses such as tall fescue and bluegrass. Diseases such as brown patch and dollar spot have been seen this season, but turf will begin to recover when weather becomes more favorable. September is a good time to rake thatch and dead areas to over-seed. Trees are losing leaves prematurely, but most hardwood trees can tolerate premature leaf loss, and will leaf out next year. Some evergreens, especially deciduous types such as dawn redwood are turning brown. Watch these trees for new growth next spring.

Editor: Susan Barton
Extension Horticulturist

Sclerotia of the Southern blight fungus on *Pachysandra procumbens*.
Photo credit: J. Testa



GROWING DEGREE DAYS
AS OF September 13, 2016

- Swarthmore College (Delaware County, PA) = NA ('15 = NA)
- Fischer Greenhouse (New Castle County) = 3307 ('15 = 3113)
- Research & Educ. Center, Georgetown (Sussex County) = 3391 ('15 = 3207)

Oleander aphids. Photo credit: B. Kunkel

