

ORNAMENTALS

• H O T L I N E •

April 6, 2018

Issue 3

WEEDS

Peter Dernoeden
Professor Emeritus, University of Maryland

COLD WET WEATHER AND PREEMERGENT CONTROL. A question being asked by LCO's is "how will all of this cold and wet weather" impact their preemergence applications? Because preemergence herbicides are degraded mostly by microbial activity (which require warm soils), any applications in March will not be impacted significantly due to heavy rain or snow. In over 30 years of observation at the University of Maryland in College Park near D.C., I noted that crabgrass almost always germinates April 15 ± 7 days, regardless if it has been a warm or cold March. Early crabgrass germination is sparse and most preemergence herbicides will kill any tiny plants that have emerged before mid-April. The big surge in crabgrass emergence does not happen until about mid-May in the Philadelphia - Washington DC corridor. Regardless, preemergence herbicides should be applied by early April for best results.

Previous paragraph excerpted from Drl Pete's Turf Tips.

DISEASES

Nancy Gregory
Plant Diagnostician

WHITE PINE DECLINE is a vague syndrome for sudden unexplained death of white pine, where it is difficult to determine a cause. Sometime individual trees will die in a stand or a row, but not all of the trees are affected. Symptoms of white pine decline include yellowing of needles (not seasonal yellowing and drop, which is normal in the fall). Interior needles drop in late spring and summer, and new needles may appear shorter than normal. Bark may also be dry and split on these trees. We don't really understand white pine decline, since it is difficult to differentiate from other disease and cultural issues. Environmental stress such as cold, wind, saturated soils, compacted soils, salts, and other factors affect white pine, and trees that are stressed are more susceptible to invasion by pathogens and insect pests. There are several root rotting fungi that affect white pine, including *Phytophthora* and *Leptographium* (cause of procerum root rot), but lab tests are needed to confirm. Management of white pine decline includes good planting practices (good drainage, soil prep, neutral pH), a sunny location not prone to wind, and not planting too densely. Alternatives for clayey wet soils include bald cypress or spruce.

ORNAMENTAL GRASSES (warm season) should be cut back in the spring when new growth is expected to begin. Cut to a height of

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What's Hot!

Upcoming short courses for the Nursery and Landscape Industry:

April 11, 2018 - Tree Planting Demonstration, 4-6 pm, University of Delaware Botanic Gardens, 531 S College Avenue, Newark. Meet at the entrance to Fischer Greenhouse \$15. One nutrient management credit. Contact cjmurphy@udel.edu.

April 11, 2018 - Guided Walk: Highlights of Spring Plant Sale. 4:30-6 PM. Meet inside brick wall outside UDBG office. UDBG Director and UD Professor **John Frett** will lead a guided walk through UDBG of plants offered in the plant sale, and if there's time, preview the containerized plants. Minimum: 10 people; Maximum: 25 people. UDBG Friends Members: \$5; Nonmembers: \$10 Pre-payment required.

April 20, 2018 - Turfgrass Management Program, University of Delaware, Newark, DE and Research and Education Center, Georgetown, DE. Registration is \$15. One nutrient management credit. To register contact Terra Eby at (302)-730-4000 or terra@udel.edu

April 25, 2018 - Christmas Tree Production Workshop, 4-6 pm, Delaware Department of Agriculture. Taught by Brian Kunkel and Nancy Gregory. For more info, contact ngregory@udel.edu.

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For more information

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

Helpful numbers to know:



Garden Line	831-8862
(for home gardeners only)	
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/>

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Diseases (Continued)

about 4-5 inches. If not cut, new growth will be delayed since the warmth of the sun doesn't reach the crown. Overgrown or crowded grass types can be divided in the spring. Japanese silver grass (*Miscanthus* sp.) is susceptible to blight caused by the fungus *Stagonospora*. Leaf spots and streaks, sometimes purple to rusty brown, occur most noticeably on the white portions of the leaves. Prune out the worst affected and remove from the property, do not compost nearby. The fungus will not affect other plant species. Consider replacing *Miscanthus* sp. with native warm season grasses, like Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) or switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*) that are not invasive exotic species.

Editor: Susan Barton
Extension Horticulturist

What's Hot (Continued)

▪ **April 26, 2018** - Tree Planting Demonstration, 4-6 pm,
▪ Sussex County Extension Office, 16483 County Seat
▪ Highway, Georgetown. \$15. One nutrient management credit.
▪ Contact wootten@udel.edu.



▪ *Panicum virgatum* 'Northwind' and *Panicum amarum*
▪ 'Dewey Blue' near Lewes. Photo credit: S. Barton

GROWING DEGREE DAYS
AS OF April 3, 2018

- Swarthmore College (Delaware County, PA) = 19 ('17 = 58)
- Fischer Greenhouse (New Castle County) = 18 ('17 = 68)
- Research & Educ. Center, Georgetown (Sussex County) = 25 ('17 = 99)