Cooperative Extension

ORNAMENTALS

• H O T L I N E •

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INSECTS

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TULIPTREE AND MAGNOLIA SCALE. Tuliptree scale and Magnolia scale are two soft scales that are very difficult to distinguish, since both are frequently found on tuliptree and magnolia. Tuliptree scale occasionally feeds on lindens, and magnolia scale on Virginia creeper. Both species overwinter as second instars and resume feeding in the spring. Their feeding results in copious amounts of honeydew and sooty mold from July through August.

Crawlers could be active now and we are close to peak activity based on growing degree days. They are one of our largest soft scales and only have one generation per year. Ants, wasps, flies, and bees might be seen on or around infested trees since they frequently take advantage of the sugar-filled honeydew as an energy resource. Female tuliptree scales are grayish-green to pinkish-orange mottled with black and their crawlers are active from 2016 to 3212 [2860 peak] GDD_{50}. Female magnolia scales are pinkish-orange to brownish, smooth and are often covered with a white mealy wax until their crawlers emerge starting around 2075 to 3247 [2746 peak] GDD_{50}. To scout for crawler activity, place double-sided sticky tape around branches with swollen females producing honeydew. The small dark-red crawlers become stuck on this tape when they try and crawl across it in search of new feeding sites. Weekly inspection and replacement when necessary will reveal when crawler densities are high.

(Continued)

DISEASES

Nancy Gregory
Plant Diagnostician
Jen Rushton, Intern

PEONY LEAF BLOTCH, also called measles, is a common disease of peony caused by the fungus *Cladosporium paenoiae.* Spots or blotches occur on leaves or stems, and range from red spots ("measles") to large brown/purple blotches. Symptoms are obvious and infection can be severe, but the disease will not cause the death of plants. The fungus survives in plant debris, and produces spores in the spring that are splashed onto young foliage and stems through rain or irrigation. Sanitation (removing plant debris in late fall or early spring before plants break dormancy) is important in reducing peony blotch in the home garden. Avoid overhead water on peony foliage, reducing the favorable environment for disease development. Fungicides are seldom necessary, but could be applied right after flowering.

(Continued)

What's Hot!

Leafhoppers are incredibly prevelant this year. It could be because all the rain we've had has led to excellent plant growth giving leafhoppers plenty of sustenance. Leafhoppers can be found on many hosts but are most noticeable on perennial stems and shrub stems. What we see primarily is their white fecal matter covering the stems. If you disturb the stem or try to wipe it off, you will find leafhoppers present. They do not damage plants, but the white debris can be unsightly. You can remove it mechanically with your hand or a stream of water, but the leafhoppers are likely to return.

Peony leaf blotch. 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 pictures at http://sites.udel.edu/ornamentals/

Diseases (Continued)

PHYTOPHTHORA ROOT ROT is caused by a soil-borne fungus-like microbe, affecting woody and herbaceous landscape plants, especially in situations where soil is saturated. Azalea, holly, rhododendron, and juniper are the most frequently affected plants in our landscapes. *Phytophthora* is favored by planting susceptible species and cultivars in poorly drained soils, or by overwatering in sites with adequate drainage. The best control for *Phytophthora* is to avoid it in the first place. With a *Phytophthora* infestation in a landscape site, the best option is to remove the affected plants and replace with resistant species. Some good choices include *Ilex glabra* (inkberry holly), *Clethra alnifolia* (summersweet), *Itea* sp (sweetspire), *Physocarpus opufoliius* (Eastern ninebark), *Nandina*, *Liriope*, ornamental grasses and *Leucothoe.* A drench with an oomycete fungicide can help at re-planting.

Insects (Continued)

Numerous natural enemies, including a predaceous caterpillar, attack both scale species but sometimes they are unable to keep scale populations suppressed. Horticultural oil, insecticidal soap, Distance (IGR) or Talus (IGR) are products available for controlling crawlers of both scales. Imidacloprid or other neonicotinoids are available for use but applications should be earlier in the summer so there is enough time for the product to move to the target areas of the plant. Tree injections of emamectin benzoate, imidacloprid, or dinotefuran are other options, especially where traffic safety is a concern. Neonicotinoids should be used with caution as those products may impact pollinator health. Application of pyrethroids is another option if they are made during crawler activity; however they frequently have a greater impact on the natural enemies.

Editor: Susan Barton
Extension Horticulturist

GROWING DEGREE DAYS

AS OF August 7, 2018

- Swarthmore College (Delaware County, PA) = 2351 ('17 =2306)
- Fischer Greenhouse (New Castle County) = 2318 ('17 =2329)
- Research & Educ. Center, Georgetown (Sussex County) = 2468 ('17 = 2579)

Ants and magnolia scale. Photo credit: B. Kunkel