

ORNAMENTALS

• H O T L I N E •

INSECTS

August 16, 2019

Brian Kunkel
Ornamental IPM Specialist

FLATIDS are a plant hopper found in high numbers this summer. The rainfall in spring and early summer has been good for many plants; consequently, also good for a number of the insects that feed on them. This group of insects sit on stems or branches of host plants and suck out plant juices. Some common host plants are roses, sunflowers, hostas, coneflowers, and many others. Waxy filaments stuck to the twigs, stems, branches or other plant parts indicate their presence. Investigation of the waxy areas causes the insect to “shuffle” to the other side of the stem to avoid being spotted or jump away until the investigator leaves. The wax may cover much of the plant, but rarely causes lasting injury or negative impact to plant health. Treatments are not typically warranted; however, if control is desired, insecticidal soap, a contact insecticide such as a pyrethroid (active ingredient ends in -thrin), or an insecticide with some systemic properties could be used. A stream of water or hand wiping clean will work but the insects will likely return.

Leafhoppers and tree hoppers are related to flatids and have also been abundant. SHARPSHOOTERS (Cicadellidae), a type of leafhopper, are associated with vectoring bacteria leaf scorch (BLS) (*Xylella fastidiosa*). They use piercing-sucking mouthparts to feed on xylem fluid and obtain bacteria from an infected host plant. The bacteria become lodged in the foregut of the insect and within an hour or two could be vectored to a new host plant.

Some of the shade trees affected by BLS include, flowering dogwood, sweet gum, many oaks, red maple, and London plane tree among others. Alternative hosts include goldenrod, buckeye, English ivy, Oriental bittersweet, mugwort, wild grape and others. The role these alternative hosts play in the spread of the disease or source of inoculum for potential vectors is unknown. Vectors of BLS in shade trees is also unknown; however, some of the insects capable of vectoring *X. fastidiosa* diseases in other crops (e.g., grapes) have been found in shade trees during the growing season.

DISEASES

Nancy Gregory
Plant Diagnostician

BOXWOOD DECLINE is long term decline and dieback of boxwood, different than the boxwood blight we have been scouting for in recent years. Boxwood plantings are often old and manicured to dense forms. Over time, soil becomes depleted and compacted, and plants are under environmental stress from temperature and moisture fluctuations. Volutella blight and Macrophomina are common in these sites. There is a new

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Issue 21

What's Hot!

Leaf drop due to drought stress is noticeable regionally.

Southern blight caused by *Sclerotium rolfsii* spreads rapidly in hot weather. Remove affected plants.

We are continuing to see lots of fall webworm, dogwood sawfly damage and caterpillar damage to oaks. But also the “fun” insects swallowtails, monarch butterflies, skippers among others are actively flying.

Japanese beetle adults should be decreasing because we are getting close to the end of their activity period as adults, but we should start to see signs of white grubs in turf or flower beds --especially if we stay generally dry (thank goodness for rain this week).



Close up of wax and flatid nymphs. Photo credit: B. 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://extension.udel.edu/ornamentals/>

Diseases (Continued)

Colletotrichum dieback of boxwood that has been seen in several states, characterized by a black color to the area under the bark at the base of plants.

BEECH LEAF DISEASE is a new disease on American beech that has been found in northeastern Ohio and Pennsylvania over the past four or five years. Beech leaf disease was recently identified in New York State. European beech and Asian beech have also been found with symptoms. Symptoms include dark interveinal patches on leaves, very noticeable when backlit, almost appearing as stripes on leaves. Affected foliage puckers, darkens, and dries. Trees decline and die within several years. Although the cause remains unknown, a foliar nematode in the genus *Litylenchus* has been found associated with symptomatic leaves. Any suspect samples should be submitted to the UD Plant Diagnostic Clinic.



Beech leaf disease symptoms. Photo credit: Ohio DNR

Editor: Susan Barton
Extension Horticulturist



Boxwood dieback twig section. Photo credit: R. Singh, LSU