

ORNAMENTALS

• H O T L I N E •

INSECTS

March 20, 2020

Brian Kunkel
Ornamental IPM Specialist

APHIDS are always one of our earliest active insects in the spring. A variety of species can be found on plants in the greenhouse or throughout plantings in the landscape. Luckily, a variety of natural enemies such as parasitoids, green or brown lace wings, syrphids, predatory midges, minute pirate bugs, and lady beetles help keep aphid populations suppressed in many situations. Some of these predators and parasitoids are valuable management tools for greenhouse operators when used properly. Businesses that maintain landscapes should either incorporate or encourage the use of flowering plants in the landscape to attract these beneficial insects to the area. Many of the predators and parasitoids will use the flowering plants as an alternative food source, their populations up when pest populations dwindle. Insecticide use for managing aphids in landscapes is seldom warranted; however, in greenhouses products such as acetamiprid (neonicotinoid with less impact on pollinators), azadirachtin, *Beauveria bassiana*, flonicamid, pymetrozine, horticultural oil, or insecticidal soap are a few of the options available.

Aphids and other early spring active insects may be affected by swings in temperature such as warm to near freezing, but how it impacts their populations is difficult to predict because there are many factors to consider. Consequently, scouting and monitoring early insect populations are important, and early spring is a good time to begin implementing the upcoming season's strategy to manage those difficult pests encountered last year. A scouting plan can be developed from last year's management records to better target plants or properties that had difficult to manage insect and disease pressure last year. Refine last year's strategy to incorporate management tactics that worked sooner against those troublesome pests; thus saving time, energy, effort and money. If you are unsure, feel free to contact any of our extension agents, myself or our new plant diagnostician (arriving in April) for suggestions.

DISEASES

Nancy Gregory
Plant Diagnostician

SPRING CLEANUP is an important phase of gardening and landscape efforts, to reduce or eliminate "Initial Inoculum" of disease-causing micro-organisms. Prune out old infections of fire blight, bacterial blight, canker, and rust galls from woody ornamentals, including twig swellings and old affected fruit found on juniper, quince, serviceberry, and hawthorn. Brown rot mummies can serve as reservoirs of *Monilinia* on peach and other stone fruits. Prune out diseased material when the weather is dry, prune well below the affected areas, and clean pruners between

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UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Issue 1

What's Hot!

Callery pears have just started to bloom. This is a great time to convince homeowners to replace their Callery pear with a non-invasive (maybe even native) flowering tree. Point out all the pears blooming on the roadside and how pervasive they have become. Each person who owns a Callery pear is contributing to the spread.

Now is the time to apply a preemergent herbicide for Japanese stilt grass control (*Microstegium viminium*). This preemergent should go down about 2 weeks before crabgrass control is applied.

For the first two issues of Ornamentals Hotline, we will mail to all 2019 subscribers. To subscribe visit this URL <http://www.udel.edu/ornamentals-hotline>. For now we are not sending print versions because UD printing is not operational.

Due to the current COVID-19 situation, UD offices are closed and staff are working remotely through at least March 29. We have taken this step to protect the health and safety of our community but we want to remain as responsive to clientele as possible. Agents are still responding to phone calls and distance communication. Below is a listing of the best way to contact agents.

New Castle County contact Carrie Murphy at (302) 831-1426 or cjmurphy@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/	

Diseases (Continued)

cuts. Discard pruned branches for disposal off the property, do not leave in a nearby cull pile, or chip on site.

PLANT VIRUSES such as tobacco mosaic virus (TMV) may be found in plug trays of annuals that were shipped in January and February. Individual companies and each state Department of Agriculture has inspectors and clean plant protocols, but infected plants slip through. Subtle symptoms include a mild chlorosis or mottle, or some stunting. If you are concerned, contact your supplier for information, or send plant samples in to the UD Plant Diagnostic Clinic for testing. TMV is easily mechanically transmissible, has a very wide host range and is able to survive for a long time on debris, pots, and tools. It is always a good practice to inspect plants in retail and wholesale settings.

- **Kent County** contact Blake Moore at (302) 730-4000 or rbmoore@udel.edu
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- **Sussex County** contact Tracy Wootten at 302-236-0298 or wootten@udel.edu
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- **Soil test submission procedures have changed.** For up to date soil testing information, including how to purchase kits and submit soil samples please visit the Soil Testing Laboratory's website: <https://www.udel.edu/academic/s/colleges/canr/cooperative-extension/environmental-stewardship/soil-testing/>
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- The new address for sending soil samples is:
- UD Soil Testing Laboratory, PO Box 9089, Newark, DE 19714



Winter injury on boxwood.
Photo credit: T. Wootten

Editor: Susan Barton
Extension Horticulturist

GROWING DEGREE DAYS
AS OF March 17, 2020

- Swarthmore College (Delaware County, PA) = 16 ('19 = 17 one week earlier)
- Fischer Greenhouse (New Castle County) = 18 ('19 = 15 one week earlier)
- Research & Educ. Center, Georgetown (Sussex County) = 36 ('19 = 30 one week earlier)