

# ORNAMENTALS



• H O T L I N E •

September 25, 2020

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 have received management requests for these two insects. Most of the time the homeowner, business or park is concerned because they wish to have 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 another month.

Oleander aphids, sometimes called milkweed aphids, are yellow and black, and sequester cardiac glycosides from milkweed; 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 to reduce the amount of tender growth the aphids prefer. Insecticidal soap is often the product of choice if chemicals are used because of concern for monarch butterflies.

## DISEASES

Jill Pollok  
Plant Diagnostician

PESTALOTIOPSIS TIP BLIGHT OF ARBORVITAE has been found on a number of arborvitae samples coming into the clinic, either as a primary or secondary issue. This disease is caused by fungi in the *Pestalotiopsis* family which generally attack arborvitae (*Thuja* spp.), but Falsecypress (*Chamaecyparis* spp.), juniper (*Juniperus* spp.), and *Cryptomeria* spp. are also hosts. Most *Pestalotiopsis* species fall into three categories: those that live within plant tissue and don't cause disease, those that are pathogenic, and those that are saprophytes; colonizing recently dead or dying tissue. In many cases with this disease, the foliage has been weakened by unfavorable weather or growing conditions, and the fungus took advantage of an already weakened plant. Like the disease name suggests, symptoms first appear on branch tips, usually on new growth. Foliage turns yellow and eventually brown, with symptoms progressing toward the interior of the twig. Small, black fruiting bodies form on dead tissue. This

(continued)

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

## *What's Hot!*

Tips on Winterizing your stormwater pond with a Special Question and Answer Session. The final event in the 2020 stormwater workshop series is a Q & A webinar on Thursday, Oct. 8, 2020, from 10 a.m. to noon. register now. Also, if you missed a previous event or just want to learn more, the PowerPoint presentations and recordings are available online.

Protect the root zone of trees during construction. Construction of an inground pool about 10 feet away from an large oak will injure some of the roots

First industry short course was held on September 17, 2020 with professionals looking at Emerald Ash Borer test plots in which trees are stressed to understand their susceptibility to EAB.

## TURF

John Emerson  
Nutrient Management Agent

TURFGRASS FALL FERTILITY—proper fertilizer and timing is integral to maintaining healthy turf. Now is the time to apply nitrogen to cool season grasses, to "front load" the turf's carbohydrate storage in order to have a more vigorous plant the following season. For warm season turf all nitrogen applications should

(continued)

*For more information*

on pests and 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 photos at <http://extension.udel.edu/ornamentals/>

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Diseases (continued)

disease can cause twig death. It can show up any time in the growing season and often appears in the spring after a plant has been stressed or damaged by winter injury. Humid, wet weather favors this disease. In wet conditions, the fungus sporulates profusely and spreads to new foliage or nearby plants. To reduce the potential of disease, plant arborvitae in full sun. Avoid planting in low or shady areas. Space plants properly to allow for foliage drying and reduced extended leaf wetness. Minimize environmental stress; water during drought conditions. The best course of action for management of any needle and shoot blight pathogen is to prune and discard as many infected plant parts as much as possible. Prune out infected branches during dry weather. Spring applications of fungicides (containing mancozeb, thiophanate-methyl, chlorothalonil, or propiconazole) can be effective at preventing new infections but are not warranted at this point in the season.

Turf (continued)

have been completed 3-4 weeks ago. Using high efficiency fertilizers in the fall helps spread out nutrient release over several weeks to several months depending on release mechanism. Organic sources and methylene urea forms of nitrogen are good choices, but they are highly dependent on microbial activity to break down nitrogen into plant available forms. Since soil temperatures dictate microbial activity, using these as the soil temperature is falling may not maximize uptake and minimize loss in the fall. Sulfur coated and polymer coated fertilizers are a much better option for the fall and have low burn potential. They are slow release fertilizers that require water to break down the prill coating. The thickness of the coating determines the length of N release.

Editor: Susan Barton  
Extension Horticulturist



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE  
COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION

**GROWING  
DEGREE DAYS**  
AS OF September 22, 2020

- Swarthmore College (Delaware County, PA) 3313 ('19 = 3549)
- Fischer Greenhouse (New Castle County, DE) = 3230 ('19 =3484)
- Research & Education Center - Georgetown (Sussex County, DE) = 3449 ('19 =3707)



Pestalotiopsis tip blight symptoms on *Thuja* spp.  
Photo credit: C. Michaud, Heartwood Landscaping



Milkweed bug. Photo credit: B. Kunkel



Aphids in the garden.  
Photo credit: B. Kunkel



Pestalotiopsis sporulation during humid conditions. Photo credit: B. Watt



EAB Short Course  
Photo credit: M. Walfred