

Agriculture & Landscape Program

Landscape,
Nursery &
Urban
Forestry
Program

UMass Extension Landscape Message #12 - 2004

May 21, 2004

Scouting Information by Region

Environmental Data

The following growing degree day (GDD) and precipitation data was collected from May 13 through May 19, 2004. Soil temperature and phenological indicators were observed on May 19, 2004. Accumulated GDDs represent the heating units above the 50° F. baseline temperature collected via our mini-computers since the beginning of the current growing season. Please note that this data is particularly useful for pinpointing pest development at any time during the season.

Region/Location	2004 GROWING DEGREE DAYS		Soil Temp (°F at 4" depth)	Precipitation (1-Week Gain)
	1-Week Gain	Total accumulation for 2004		
Cape Cod	74	234	65° F	0.15"
Southeast	86	283	60° F	0.00"
East	74	309	60° F	0.35"
Central	101	280	59° F	0.32"
West	98	311	55° F	0.27"
Berkshire	111	306	65° F	0.29"

Regional Notes

Cape Cod - General conditions: It has been on the dry side here on the Cape for the past week. While we have experienced several misty, grey days, there has been little in the way of precipitation and soils are dry. Many of the early spring flowering shrubs are in bloom and lawns are green. Wisteria is beginning to bloom.

Pests/problems: Winter moth is the chief insect pest. People are starting to notice the ballooning caterpillars and the tattered leaves on many deciduous trees. It is particularly noticeable along the Rt. 6A corridor. Eastern tent caterpillar nests continue to expand and defoliation is evident on wild black cherry. Lily leaf beetles are laying eggs on the foliage of Asiatic and Oriental lilies. Damage from the frost which occurred on the 4th of May is evident on some plant material, particularly pin oak, which was just breaking bud when the frost occurred. Native flowering dogwood bracts are badly spotted as they expand. This may be spot anthracnose or dogwood anthracnose, as conditions were excellent for infection this year. Apple scab lesions have been observed on susceptible crabapples. Daylily streak is evident in the landscape.

Southeast - General conditions: We continue to see new plants showing winter damage. Many arborvitae have dead sections. Very little rain over the past two weeks with no rain accumulation the past week. Don't forget to water newly planted trees, shrubs, and other plant material. Flowering Dogwood, *Dicentra spectabilis*, *Dicentra eximia*, Jack-in-the-pulpit, Dutchman's breeches, Aquilegia, (Columbine), Vinca, Tiarella, *Phlox divaricata*, *Phlox stolonifera*, Pulmonaria, Violets and Trillium are in full bloom. Kerria, Redbud, Wisteria, Exochorda, Epimedium, Daffodils and Arabis are past bloom. Deutzia, spicebush and perennial geranium and doricum have begun bloom. **Pests/problems:** Winter moth caterpillars continue to be the primary landscape pest feeding on many plants including oak, fringetree, roses, ash, apples, crabapples, and particularly maples (Norway, red, Japanese, paperbark, three-flowered, and other species). The greenish caterpillars are leaving frass (feces) on patios, cars, etc. causing concern to many homeowners. The white, waxy flocculent masses of the woolly apple aphid were observed on the under-surfaces of European beech. Brown needles on larch are most likely due to the larch casebearer which has begun to pupate. Azalea sawfly, lily leaf beetle, hemlock woolly adelgid, gypsy moth caterpillar, carpenter bees, bumble bees, yellow jackets, mosquitoes, ticks, European pine sawflies, and eastern tent caterpillars are all active. Carpenter ant

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adults are active and homeowners are finding them indoors. Buttercups, chickweed, violets, dandelions, veronica and ground ivy are prevalent lawn weeds. Bacterial leaf spot was found on common lilac in Hanson. Spindle galls are forming on silver maple and gouty oak gall was observed on oak. Twig and branch dieback due to winter injury continues to show up on a wide range of plant material. Japanese holly, *Ilex glabra* (inkberry holly) and heaths and heathers are some of the plants hardest hit.

East - General Conditions: Cool and breezy except for Saturday when the temperature reached 89° F.

Pests/Problems: Lily leaf beetles have been spotted, slugs are eating Hosta leaves, and mosquitoes have been observed.

Central - General Conditions: Cloudy and cool mornings have been developing into mild and sunny spring days. Rainfall has been limited, and the soil could use a nice soaking rain. *Weigela florida* and *Deutzia scabra* are beginning to bloom here as well as the other plants reported below. *Aesculus hippocastanum* (Horsechestnut) and *A. x carnea* 'Briotti' are both in full bloom..

West - General Conditions: The temperatures have been warmer over the last week with highs ranging from the upper 70s to the upper 80s. There were a couple of rainy, humid days, also. The episodic heavy rains knocked petals off many flowering trees and shrubs. However, the lawns are a deep green as the dandelions go to seed. And in the gardens as the last of the tulips fade, leaves on hostas and fronds on ferns unfurl, and columbines burst into bloom. Finally, many conifers including pine, hemlock, and spruce are 'ablaze' with light-green candles of new growth and floral development. **Pests/Problems:** The primary infections of apple scab are developing on leaves of susceptible crab apples now. In a week or so the spots will have a dark green velvety hue to them. The hue is due to fruiting structures and secondary spores. This process, and the ensuing spore release, continues through the summer unless the weather dries out. In addition, the tents of eastern tent caterpillars are visible in wild cherry, hawthorn, apple, and crab apple in this area. Ticks continue to be active.

Berkshire - General Conditions: Precipitation has been sparse this month, leaving soil moisture at moderate to dry levels. Despite the lack of significant rain, gardens and landscapes are lush and the bloom has been spectacular. However, newly transplanted woody and herbaceous plant material should be watered well. **Pests/Problems:** Ongoing problems include more winter killed plants, carpenter bees, carpenter ants, European sawfly. Leaf rollers are now feeding on newly emerged leaves of a number of trees.

Phenology

The phenological indicators are a visual tool for correlating plant development with pest development. The following are the indicator plants and the stages of bloom observed for this period:

Indicator Plants - Stages of Flowering (begin, b/full, full, f/end, end)						
PLANT NAME (Botanic/Common)	C.C.	S.E.	EAST	CENT.	P.V.	BERK.
<i>Leucothoe fontanesiana</i> (Drooping Leucothoe)	*	*	*	*	begin	*
<i>R. catawbiense</i> (Catawba Rhododendron.)	b/full	b/full	*	begin	begin	begin
<i>Syringa meyeri</i> (Meyer Lilac)	*	full	*	full	begin	*
<i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i> (Rock Cotoneaster)	*	*	*	*	*	begin
<i>Crataegus</i> spp. (Hawthorn)	*	*	*	*	b/full	*
<i>Enkianthus campanulatus</i> (Redvein Enkianthus)	begin	*	*	full	*	*
<i>Lonicera tatarica</i> (tatarian honeysuckle)	begin	full	f/end	full	full	full
<i>Kerria japonica</i> (Kerria)	b/full	end	f/end	full	full	*
<i>Prunus serotina</i> (Black Cherry)	b/full	*	*	*	full	full
<i>Elaeagnus umbellata</i> (Autumn Olive)	b/full	full	full	*	*	*
<i>Rhododendron</i> 'Exbury' (Exbury Azalea)	full	full	begin	*	full	*
<i>Spiraea x vanhouttei</i> (Vanhoutte Spirea)	*	full	full	full	*	full
<i>R. carolinianum</i> (Carolina Rhododendron)	full	full	full	*	*	*
<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i> (Horsechestnut)	full	full	full	full	full	*
<i>R. carolinianum</i> (Carolina Rhododendron)	full	full	full	*	*	*
<i>Cornus florida</i> (Flowering Dogwood)	full	full	full	full	f/end	*
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i> (European Mountainash)	*	f/end	begin	*	full	*
<i>Halesia</i> spp. (Silverbell)	full	f/end	end	end	end	full
<i>Syringa vulgaris</i> (Common Lilac)	full	f/end	end	end	end	full
<i>Spiraea prunifolia</i> (Bridalwreath Spirea)	f/end	end	full	*	*	full
<i>Viburnum burkwoodii</i> (Burkwood Viburnum)	end	end	*	end	*	full

<i>Viburnum carlesii</i> (Koreanspice Viburnum)	end	end	end	end	end	full
<i>Prunus x cistena</i> (Purpleleaf Sand Cherry)	f/end	*	f/end	*	*	f/end
<i>Cercis canadensis</i> (Redbud)	full	end	end	end	end	f/end
<i>Malus</i> spp. (Crabapple)	f/end	end	end	full	f/end	end
<i>Chaenomeles speciosa</i> (Floweringquince)	full	end	*	*	end	end
* = no activity to report/information not available						

- CAPE COD REGION - Roberta Clark, Horticulturist for Barnstable County, Barnstable.
- SOUTHEAST REGION - Deborah Swanson, Horticulturist for UMass Extension in Plymouth County, Hanson
- EAST REGION - James R. Allen, Horticulturist and Greenhouse Manager for UMass Biology Department, Boston
- CENTRAL REGION - Joann Vieira, Superintendent of Horticulture, Tower Hill Botanic Garden, Boylston.
- WESTERN REGION - Dan Gillman, Plant Pathologist, Urban Forestry Diagnostic Lab, UMass, Amherst.
- BERKSHIRE REGION - Ronald Kujawski, Nursery Specialist, UMass Extension Agriculture & Landscape Program, Amherst.

Woody Ornamentals

Insects

Winter injury to broadleaf evergreens (rhododendrons, holly, mountain laurel, as well as to junipers and taxus continues to be extremely noticeable as affected foliage dries and turns brown. In most cases, buds remain alive. Pruning can wait until the full extent of injury is known.

Caterpillars

In general, products containing *Bacillus thuringiensis* (*B.t. kurstaki*) are very effective against the younger free-feeding caterpillars in the Lepidoptera only. Products that contain spinosad are generally very effective against caterpillars in the Lepidoptera and the Hymenoptera (wasp-like as adults). There are also many chemical insecticides that are labeled for caterpillars, which are pyrethroids, organo-phosphates, carbamates, and other classes.

Lepidoptera (moths):

- **Winter Moth** - Continued monitoring indicates very high population levels for this pest this year. Defoliation injury is becoming very noticeable in some areas. The small green caterpillars are free feeders now and are often seen hanging on silken threads. Much more defoliation is expected. Thus far, host plants include all maples, oaks, crabapples, lilac, ash, pear, rose, blueberries, and others. Near the end of their feeding cycle (perhaps within the next 2 weeks) they may feed on herbaceous plants as well. Inspect for the green caterpillars with only two pairs of prolegs. Treat when found in abundance and before heavy injury occurs. It may be too late for *B.t* products to be effective against this pest now. We have received several very informative reports about this pest already due to our request for the past 2 weeks (**see the box below**). We still need to hear from others. Thank you for your contributions. We are especially interested in hearing from those towns north of Boston.
- **Green Pug Moth (*Chlorocystis rectangulator* (L))** has been reported from western and central MA feeding in the buds of apples. This caterpillar is approximately the same size as winter moth, which it strongly resembles. These caterpillars are green with two pairs of prolegs. In small numbers, their injury is minimal and can be treated with organophosphate insecticides from the tight-cluster to early-pink stages (apples - mostly now past). These caterpillars are now maturing, and have the characteristic dark line along the length of their backs that differentiates them from winter moth caterpillars. Full size is approximately 1/2"; they will pupate by petal fall of apple blossoms.
- **Fall Cankerworm** - Once in large numbers in coastal areas of MA, it may now be reduced to small numbers. However, there may still be a potentially large population north of Boston. They share many of the same hosts as Winter Moth. Currently, they appear very similar to Winter Moth by being approximately the same size and color. Upon very close inspection, Winter Moth has only two pairs of prolegs while Fall Cankerworm has 3 pairs, with the first (most proximal pair) being very small. It is said that Fall Cankerworm has '2 1/2 pairs' of prolegs due to the reduced size of the first pair. As Fall Cankerworm caterpillars mature, they will become very dark and appear quite different from Winter Moth. Fall Cankerworm, when in large numbers, can be a serious defoliator. Treat as other lepidopteran caterpillars.
- **Eastern Tent Caterpillar and Forest Tent Caterpillar** are in noticeable numbers this year in much of MA and other New England states. This is somewhat uncommon. It is suspected that the wet springs in previous years has limited the success of the natural controls (parasites, in particular). Monitor now for silken webs of (ETC) that are in branch crotches. ETC is generally found attacking *Malus* and *Prunus* species. Some host plants have numerous webs and defoliation is extreme. Currently these webs are approximately 6" in diameter and ETC is very near to being finished with its larval (feeding) period. They will soon drop to the ground and be gone until next year. Small infestations can be removed and destroyed by hand while the caterpillars are still within the webs. **Or**, treat with one of the recommended biorational pesticides; (too late for *B.t.*, however). Spinosad, is more appropriate at this time. FTC is active and the caterpillars of these have been feeding, mostly on oaks, and have been seen dispersing on silken threads. Populations once again appear to be very high in the southeastern region of the state but they are being seen in most regions.

Larch Casebearer Caterpillars caterpillars are still feeding on the new foliage but will be pupating within the next 2 weeks, or so. Monitor for population size and treat if necessary. It may be too late for *B.t.* for this pest.

- **Gypsy Moth** caterpillars, although limited this year in numbers, are settled and feeding. Last year's wet spring and summer contributed greatly to the spread of the fungus, *Entomophaga maimaiga*, which is very effective at naturally killing this caterpillar. Implemented control measures for gypsy moth may not be necessary in MA this year.
- **Fruitworms (Green)** remain active. There are many species of these that sometimes appear in large numbers and create damage on such hosts as maples, beech, fruit trees, and many other deciduous hosts. They are now much larger than winter moth. Do not confuse them with Winter Moth. Fruitworms generally have 5 pairs of prolegs and develop a white stripe down the length of their backs. They also achieve a much greater physical size than winter moth. Treat if found in large numbers (most likely, it's too late for *B.t.*).
- **Euonymus Caterpillar** is active. This small, pale yellow lepidopteran caterpillar with black spots attacks many varieties of euonymus from shrub-form to tree-form. They produce much silk but act as free feeders by moving throughout the entire plant. By mid-June, affected plants may be defoliated and covered in a fine veil of silk. Treat with *Bacillus thuringiensis* 'Kurstaki,' or a spinosad product, or with one of the many registered chemical insecticides.

Hymenoptera (sawflies):

- **European Pine Sawfly** - Caterpillars have been feeding in clusters for the past 3-4 weeks and untreated plants with this pest are now displaying unsightly defoliation. Mugo pine is a common host. Larvae are becoming quite large now as these voracious feeders consume large numbers of needles. Inspect for their activity. Small clusters can be pruned away and destroyed while larger populations can be treated with a spinosad product or one of the many registered chemical insecticides.
- **Azalea Sawfly** - This pale green caterpillar is virtually the same color as its host foliage; primarily 'Mollis' and 'Exbury' varieties of deciduous azaleas. These caterpillars feed mostly at the leaf margins and consume leaves right down to the mid vein, which they do not consume. Look for clusters on main veins and now on leaf blades. Most likely, upon very close inspection, this pest will be found. It is extremely cryptic in coloration and a challenge to find. However, it's injury is very identifiable. Treat with a spinosad product when found. This pest is only active for a few weeks in the spring but is capable of severe defoliation.
- **Rose Slug Sawfly** is active. This is another sawfly caterpillar that is only active for a short while but capable of creating much unwanted injury. These rather small, pale green caterpillars feed on the upper leaf surface (mostly) by scraping away the leaf surface (skeletonizing). Such areas first appear as a 'window-paning' effect but later turn brown as tissue dies. Treat with a spinosad product when found.

Beetles

In general, products containing spinosad are effective against the larvae (at least) of many free-feeding beetle species. However, there are also many chemical insecticides that are labeled for caterpillars, which are pyrethroids, organo-phosphates, carbamates, and other classes.

Leaf Beetles:

- **Lily Leaf Beetle** - Adults of this bright red beetle continue to feed and lay eggs. Eggs are hatching and tiny larvae are feeding. Monitor for their appearance on true lilies, fritillaria, and Solomon seal. Recent feedback from pest control practitioners suggests that NEEM products may not achieve the desired results for management of this pest. Spinosad products and many different chemical insecticides are labeled for this pest.
- **Viburnum Leaf Beetle** - Although not yet known to be in MA, it is in other New England states as well as NY. If not here yet, it will be soon. Larvae are active now. Inspect viburnum carefully for bare twigs that have a 'sandpaper' feel to them; this could be an indication of an egg-laying site. Monitor for the larvae that are free-feeders and cause much defoliation injury to viburnum. In areas where winter moth is active, do not confuse that injury with that of the viburnum leaf beetle. Visit the following Cornell web site to become more familiar with this pest: <http://www.hort.cornell.edu/vlb>

Scarab Beetles:

- **Grubs in lawns** are active. These rather large beetles congregate at night on woody plants, sometimes by the hundreds or thousands. Primarily clustering for mating purposes, they can also create much injury to foliage by feeding. Large ragged notches, and no insects being present during the day, may indicate a problem with this insect. Inspect the plant at night with a flashlight. Treat with a chemical insecticide if necessary. Visit the archive to refer to the Turf Section in Landscape Message #8 dated April 23, 2004 for more information.

Piercing-Sucking

In general, imidacloprid applied systemically is very effective on most, with the **exception** of spider mites. Horticultural oil or insecticidal soap, especially against the immature stages, is usually very effective.

Lacebugs:

- **Andromeda Lacebug** nymphs are becoming active in warmer regions of MA. Inspect the undersides of foliage for their presence. Systemic imidacloprid products work well. If contact (mechanical mode of action) pesticides, such as summer oil sprays or insecticidal soap, are utilized they need to be targeted to the foliage undersides. Japanese andromeda in sunnier growing sites will experience greater problems

with this pest.

- **Azalea Lacebug** will be active very soon, if not already in warmer parts of the state. Like Andromeda Lacebug, this pest is active all summer and capable of creating much stippling (chlorosis) of the foliage. Drought conditions and sunnier growing sites tend to favor this pest.
- **Sycamore Lacebug** will be active soon. Although common to sycamore, it can be especially destructive to English White Oak. Active all summer, it can lead to serious chlorosis of the host plant.

Plantbugs:

- **Honeylocust Plantbug** remains active. Continue monitoring by gently shaking branches over a white piece of paper and inspecting with a hand lens. If deemed necessary, apply an application of insecticidal soap, **or** one of the registered chemical insecticides. In many areas, the new growth emerged quickly enough this year to avoid being injured much by this pest.
- **Tarnished Plantbug** is active. This small, brown insect with pale yellow markings has a wide host plant range that includes shrubs and annuals. It's feeding causes brown dead patches to appear on foliage that resemble disease caused by pathogens. If much spotting occurs, controls may be necessary. This insect is active for much of the summer.

Aphids:

- **Assorted Aphid Species** are active on many different hosts. Inspect plants carefully for building populations. Catalpa, rose, lindens, and many others are common hosts for aphids. Treat with insecticidal soap sprays, an imidacloprid product, a summer oil spray, **or** with one of the many registered chemical insecticides.

Adelgids:

- **Hemlock Woolly Adelgid** can still be treated with horticultural oil but monitor plants carefully for their stage of development. Avoid oil sprays on newly emerging tender foliage. There is evidence that much winter mortality occurred (perhaps as high as 80-90%) and inspections should be made prior to applications to determine if they are necessary.

Other Piercing-Sucking Insects:

- **Spider Mites** - Several **growth regulator** products are available that offer high levels of control; mostly for population numbers that are low to moderate in size. Most are so specific that they kill spider mites but not the beneficial predatory mites. Some even possess ovicidal (egg-killing) qualities. Horticultural oil sprays can also be very effective. Many insecticides and miticides are specifically labeled for spider mites as well.
- **Spruce Spider Mite** remains active. Inspect by gently shaking branches over a piece of white paper and then inspect the paper with a hand lens. Monitor weekly to establish if population numbers increase significantly. Note the numbers of predatory mites present. Treat if necessary.

Eriophyid Mites:

- **Hemlock Eriophyid Mite** (**not** a spider mite). This tiny, peg-shaped, four-legged mite feeds openly upon needle surfaces. Inspect for its presence. It will remain active into early June. Plants with high levels of infestation become chlorotic. Treat with a horticultural oil spray when necessary.

Psyllids:

- **Boxwood Psyllid** - This pest remains active. Monitor those boxwoods with cupped foliage (last year's injury) for renewed activity of this pest. Maturing nymphs also produce fine strands of wax fibers that are very noticeable right now and aid in monitoring. Cupping of new foliage has already occurred.

Leafminers

- **Birch Leafminer** - New mines are now obvious. In most areas of the state it is too late for effective controls.
- **Inkberry Leafminer** is active within the mines as larvae. Pupation is occurring. Monitor for the adults with yellow sticky cards **now**. Inspect plants now for the brown mines to gauge the levels of infestation. Treatment is aimed at the adult flies when they emerge. However, much winter injury has occurred to foliage of Inkberry and may currently mask infestations.
- **Native Holly Leafminer** remains active in the mines as a larva, mostly in American Holly. Pupation will begin soon. Hang yellow sticky cards in affected plants to monitor for adult emergence. Treat when they appear with a registered chemical insecticide.

Scale Insects

In general, horticultural oil sprays work well against most armored scale species, especially when they are in the crawler stage. Imidacloprid does not work well on armored scales but is much more effective against many soft scales.

Armored (hard) Scales:

- Monitor for **Pine Needle Scale** on mugo and Scots pines, in particular.
- Monitor junipers for **Juniper Scale**.
- Monitor different euonymus for the **Euonymus Scale**.

Continue to monitor each at the appropriate time of the season for crawlers and treat again at that time, if necessary.

Soft Scales:

- Monitor yews and certain hollies for the **Cottony Camellia Scale (aka: Cottony Taxus Scale)**. Treat the active nymphs with a summer oil spray. This pest creates much honeydew that generates much sooty mold.
- Begin to monitor azaleas for the **Azalea Bark Scale**. Inspect inner branches for nymphs and sooty mold. Treat with a summer oil spray if necessary.

Gall Formers

Many different galls have appeared on various host plants; most are insignificant in terms of plant injury.

Felt patch galls, caused by certain Eriophyid mites, are commonly found on maples, beech, and other hosts. Although usually a tan color they can sometimes be a spectacular pink color and raise much alarm. They are harmless.

- **Aphid-induced galls** are common on certain elms. These large pouch-like galls are often very numerous. There are no controls for these nor are any deemed necessary.

Wood Attackers

Monitor previously stressed plants (drought, soil compaction, etc.) for signs of invasion.

- **Bronze Birch Borer** is one such invader. Water infested trees during drought periods. Insecticide injections may be effective in some cases.
- **Conifer Bark Beetles**, such as the **Black Turpentine Beetle** invade already stressed trees. Inspect for pitch tubes and streaks of pitch on the bark. These are a sign of an already weak tree. Water during times of drought.
- **Dogwood Borer** - Flowering dogwoods that are known to be heavily infested with the Dogwood borer can be treated with a spray of entomopathogenic nematodes now. Otherwise, continue to monitor for new infestations (adults will become active within several weeks) and continue to avoid any wounding of the tree trunks with mowing equipment and string trimmers, which encourages infestations of this pest.

Others

- **Subterranean termites** have been swarming. Most likely, they are at or very near the end for this year. Although not a pest of plants, they generate much concern when found indoors. Contact a licensed exterminator if these are found indoors.
- **Carpenter Bees** have been active for the past several weeks. They are not pests of plants but are commonly seen visiting flowers for nectar and pollen. These large bees are similar in appearance to Bumble bees but usually have a thorax that is mostly devoid of hairs, unlike bumble bees. Carpenter bees make large round holes, usually in the eaves of houses, and in the trim boards of windows and doors, especially in unheated buildings. Over the years, they can be very destructive

Reported by Robert Childs, Entomologist, UMass Extension Landscape, Nursery and Urban Forestry Program, Amherst

Diseases

Leaf spot and **shoot blight (including anthracnose)** diseases were widespread last year because of the extended periods of rainy weather in the spring and again in mid-summer in many regions of Massachusetts. The recent spring rainfall has given plants a good watering, but with young leaves developing and lots of over wintering inoculum around, trees and shrubs are vulnerable to new infections at this time. This is especially the case when accompanied by temperatures of 55°-75° F. Now is the best time to apply protective fungicides to nursery and specimen woody landscape plants that are known to be susceptible to these diseases.

Evidence of **dogwood anthracnose** from last year's infections is apparent on trees where there are buds that did not open and twigs and branches that died back. Prune off and dispose of diseased twigs and branches to reduce anthracnose inoculum. Four fungicide applications are usually needed to control dogwood anthracnose on susceptible trees during wet seasons. Begin now, as buds break open, repeat when bracts have fallen, 4 weeks later and in late summer after flower buds form. If this is a persistent problem consider planting one of the many resistant cultivars of *C. florida* and *C. kousa* now commercially available. Flowering dogwoods that are resistant to anthracnose are better able to limit the extent of dogwood anthracnose damage if they receive good cultural care. Water shortage, heat stress and winter damage weaken trees and increase the severity of the disease. Water during dry periods, fertilize as needed, and maintain 2-4 inches of composted bark mulch over as much of the root area as possible.

Sycamore, ash, and oak anthracnose diseases are evident now as dark-green to dark-brown curling leaves and shoots. Anthracnose is widespread on early leaves and shoots this year due to the abundance of inoculum on over-wintering twigs and fallen leaves, as well as the consistently wet weather. These diseases cause some premature leaf loss, but that is not going to seriously an otherwise healthy tree. In the fall fine prune infected twigs and collect and dispose of fallen leaves. Promote drying of foliage by pruning and spacing plants to increase the penetration of sunlight and air circulation in and around plants.

The current wet conditions, along with the development of immature scale-leaves/needles are favorable for infection of juniper by **Phomopsis tip blight**. Juniper shoots that are tan-gray with pinhead sized, black fruiting bodies are producing spores at this time. New growth that becomes infected this spring with

Phomopsis tip blight will turn green-yellow, then brown and die within a few weeks of infection. Management begins with the removal and disposal of infected shoot tips to reduce inoculum. Cut an inch or so below the boundary between dead and healthy tissue. Now is the time to initiate fungicide control of juniper tip blight to improve plant appearance. Grow junipers in an open, sunny location to promote drying of foliage, that are adapted to the site and that have resistant to tip blight.

The bright-colored, but unusual looking stuff that goes by such common names as white dog vomit, scrambled eggs, the yellow blob and regurgitated cat breakfast is actually a slime mold. They are primitive organisms that feed on bacteria, fungi and dead organic matter which is why they're more common in lawns and mulch. Slime mold is now visible on lawns, woodchip mulch and patios. On lawns, it can be gray, white or purple and range from several inches to a foot-wide diameter lump. Slime mold may use living plant material as a physical support, but it does not 'infect' the turf. In fact, slime molds harm lawns only if their structures become so thick that they cover entire leaf blades and thus block the plants' sunlight. If it looks unsightly, simply use a shovel to discard the offensive organism and then stir up the remaining mulch to aerate it. Or, if the structures don't look too bad, just leave them alone. They'll dry out in hot weather, become ash-gray and break up easily when raked. Slime molds become noticeable when damp weather triggers their colorful reproductive stage any time from spring through fall.

The fruiting bodies of **Rhabdocline needle cast** are visible on infected Douglasfir needles. Spores are released from these fruiting bodies during cool, wet weather from now to early summer, and infect new needles that are developing. Symptoms of Rhabdocline infection appear as elongated red-brown spots and bands on infected needles. Spots often coalesce and most of the needle turns color except for the base, which remains green. Infection tends to occur on the bottom of the tree first. Avoid overhead watering of Douglasfir at this time of the year. Provide adequate spacing and limit weed growth around trees to improve air movement and sunlight penetration so foliage dries more quickly if it is wetted. Apply fungicides to susceptible, high-value trees if this spring continues to be wet. Maintain protection during the vulnerable period when the needles are first emerging from buds until they expand to full size.

There were recent news reports about **Sudden Oak Death (SOD)**, caused by the fungus *Phytophthora ramorum*. SOD is a severe disease of oak and tanoak in certain Pacific Northwest fog forest areas. In March 2004 *Phytophthora ramorum* was found in two large ornamental nurseries in southern California. This detection demonstrates that the pathogen is not necessarily limited to the moist coastal regions of northern California and southern Oregon. At least one of the two nurseries distributes nursery stock nationwide, including Massachusetts. To date, *Phytophthora ramorum* has not been found in Massachusetts, though it has been positively identified in Florida and Georgia. The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) is monitoring this situation carefully. A number of surveys are planned by MDAR, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, and the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) nationwide and in Massachusetts to check for the presence of *Phytophthora ramorum* in nurseries and natural forest areas.

This pathogen has a wide range of host plants, including rhododendron, viburnum and camellia, which are potential 'carriers' of the fungus when plants are transported. The damage on non-oak hosts involves minor leaf spotting and twig dieback. However, infections on these non-oak hosts may contribute to a rapid build-up of the fungus in the environment, serving therefore as a reservoir of inoculum, which in turn infects woody tissues of oaks and tanoak trees.

Landscape, Nursery, and Urban Forestry Diagnostic Lab Report

The following are some of the interesting disease/abiotic disorder samples received at the UMass Extension Landscape, Nursery, and Urban Forestry Diagnostic Lab in Amherst during the period May 10 through May 14, 2004:

- **Limber pine** - several of last year's shoots were brown, stunted, and curled in well-established landscape tree; Sphaeropsis (Diplodia) shoot blight.
- **Juniper** - scattered branches with brown needles and shoot tips; Phomopsis tip blight..
- **Red oak** - leaves throughout the crown but especially lower in the tree have rounded, pale green bulges on the upper surface; oak leaf blister (*Taphrina caerulescens*, a fungus).

Reported by Dan Gillman, Plant Pathologist, based in the Urban Forestry Diagnostic Lab at UMass, Amherst, Mass

Landscape Turf

Weeds

Germination of **crabgrass** has started in several areas in the Commonwealth. Start actively monitoring for and managing crabgrass and other annual grass weeds as follows:

- Monitor and control annual weeds germinating in mulched areas. Pay special attention to mulched areas which have not received fresh mulch this spring.
- Broadleaf weeds such as dandelion, wild violet and ground ivy have either completed or nearly completed their flowering period. Broadleaf herbicide application can begin now and continue through the month of June.
- Garlic mustard is in full flower and should be controlled now before seed is produced. Garlic mustard is a biennial, therefore control now will also control seedlings.

Randall Prostack, Weed Specialist, UMass Extension Landscape, Nursery, and Urban Forestry Program, Amherst.



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