

Agriculture & Landscape Program

Landscape,
Nursery &
Urban
Forestry
Program

UMass Extension Landscape Message #23 - 2010

September 17, 2010

Scouting Information by Region

Regional Notes

Cape Cod Region (Barnstable) – General Conditions: Hurricane Earl turned out to be the hurricane that was not. While the Cape and Islands experienced gusty winds as it passed offshore, little damage occurred. The hurricane did give the Cape some much-needed rainfall, leaving between 3.5" and 5.5" in the towns across the Cape. Unfortunately, no measurable precipitation has fallen since then and soils and landscapes are once again dry. Drought stressed trees are exhibiting early fall color. Cooler temperatures have brought a touch of fall to the air. Night temperatures have fallen into the upper 40F's on a few nights.

Pests/Problems: The lack of rainfall is the number one problem in the landscape these days. Many native red maple and tupelo are showing early coloration due to water stress. Other landscape plants are flagging if they are not on an irrigation system. Sprinklers cannot keep up with the need for deep soaking. Lawns that were not on an irrigation system during the summer now have large dead patches. Yellow jacket wasps are present in large numbers and are becoming aggressive. Wasp and hornet colonies are at their largest at this time of year. Mites and lacebugs continue to be active. "Lemon" ants are swarming. Giant tar spot has been observed on Norway maple.

Southeast Region (Hanson) – General Conditions: Hanson received 1.65 inches of rain over the past two weeks, mostly from Hurricane Earl, which did not turn out to be the threat that was anticipated. Sunny days and cool nights have started to signal the start of the fall season. *Clerodendron trichotomum*, *Indigofera*, *Lespedeza*, *Hydrangea paniculata*, *Clematis terniflora* (Autumn Clematis), *Helianthus* 'Lemon Queen' *Aster divaricatus* and other fall asters, landscape roses, butterflybush, *Rudbeckia trilobum*, *Perovskia atriplicifolia* (Russian Sage), *Sedum* sp., Japanese anemones, many ornamental grasses, *Corydalis lutea*, *Gentiana* 'True Blue', *Coreopsis* 'Harvest Moon', *Rudbeckia fulgida* 'Goldsturm', *Actea (Cimicifuga) simplex*, goldenrod, *Lobelia syphilitica* and Joe-pye-weed are in full bloom. Numerous plants are displaying colorful fruit: staghorn sumac, hollies, autumn olive, crabapple, Kousa dogwood, and *Viburnum* are also providing landscape color. Drought stressed plants (red maples, sugar maples, etc) are showing premature fall color. Summer annuals and tropical plants, like coleus, lantana, dahlia, and Canna continue to add color to the landscape. **Pests/Problems:** Boxelder beetles, earwigs, slugs, aphids, mites, snails, lacebugs, and dogwood sawfly are all active. Mosquitoes are still active, and reports continue that mosquitoes are carrying Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in several towns in southeastern MA. Continue to be on the lookout for ground-nesting wasps, as well as wasps nesting in bushes and trees. Tar spot is evident on silver and Norway maple and powdery mildew continues to be seen on a wide range of plant material.

East Region (Boston) – General Conditions: Hurricane Earl did not hit Boston as hard as predicted. We received no significant storm damage and only 0.52 inches of rain. Daily temperatures have dropped significantly since Earl passed through, thanks mainly to the Canadian air coming down on northwest winds. *Acer x freemanii* (Freeman Maple) and *Nyssa sylvatica* (Black Tupelo) have started to change color. Maturing fruit of all colors can be seen throughout the landscape. **Pests/Problems:** With only 0.88 inches of rain in the first two weeks of September the soil remains dry. *Polygonum cuspidatum* (Japanese Knotweed) continues to bloom. The Dogwood Sawfly (*Macremphytus testaceus*), still in its second instar stage, continues to feed on the foliage of *Cornus* sp. (Dogwoods). Despite some skeletonized foliage this insect should not cause any harm to overall plant health.

Metro West (Waltham) – General Conditions: The month started out with a couple of days with temperatures into the 90's but the days have increasingly cooled down to recent day time temperatures falling into the 60's. Fall is finally here! Trees are changing color and fruits and nuts are developing on them providing additional interest in the landscape. Seen are the red fruits on *Cornus florida* (Flowering Dogwood), *C. kousa* (Kousa Dogwood), a variety of colors and sizes of apples on the *Malus* spp. (Crabapples), an abundance of acorns on *Quercus* spp. (Oaks) and lots of nuts on *Carya* spp. (Hickories). Late blooming trees and perennials observed in the landscape are: *Aster novae-angliae* (New England aster), *Calamagrostis acutifolia* 'Karl Foerster' (Feather Reed Grass), *Hibiscus syriacus* (Rose-of-Sharon), *Hosta* spp.

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(Plantain Lily), *Miscanthus purpurascens* (Maiden Grass), *M. sinensis* (Maiden Grass), *Panicum virgatum* 'Heavy Metal' (Heavy Metal Switch Grass), *Patrinia gibbosa* (Patrinia), *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln' (Dwarf Fountain Grass), *Rosa* sp. (Roses), *Rudbeckia fulgida* 'Goldsturm' (Black-Eyed Susan), *Sedum* 'Autumn Joy' (Upright Stonecrop), *S. 'Rosy Glow'* (Low Stonecrop), *S. sieboldii* (Low Stonecrop) and *Solidago* sp. (Goldenrod). **Pests/Problems:** In bloom and growing along most road sides, in overgrown back yards and parking lots is *Polygonum cuspidatum* (Japanese Knotweed), a non-native invasive plant.

Central Region (Boylston) – General Conditions: No report available this week.

Pioneer Valley Region (Amherst) - General Conditions: The last two weeks continued to be dry with warm temperatures the first few days, however, the average daily temperature ranged from upper 50s to lower 60s °F for the last 9 days. Fall color is beginning on red and sugar maple, honey locust, dogwood, sumac, green ash, and poison ivy. In addition, several roadside sugar maples, which suffered during the warm, dry summer weather, showed early fall color change and now are 80% or more defoliated. Grass is beginning to recover with the cool temperatures, but there are extensive brown/dormant areas on sunny non-irrigated lawns.

Berkshire Region (Great Barrington) - General Conditions: Bone dry is the best way to describe the general conditions. Soil moisture level is very low; surface soils are powdery. Leaves on many trees are turning brown and dropping. Along some roads and in some yards, the ground resembles that of mid-October with all of the fallen leaves. **Pests/Problems:** Considerable wilting is observed for many trees and shrubs and herbaceous perennials. Summer stressed lawns that would normally be recovering now are still brown. Inspection has found that some of the browning is due to grub damage. Few pests are seen on plants but wasps and deer ticks are prevalent. Leaf spots infections that occurred in spring are very noticeable now, e.g. tar spot on Norway maples. Powdery mildew is common on herbaceous perennials, lilacs and tulip trees.

Environmental Data

The following growing-degree-day (GDD) and precipitation data was collected for a two-week period, September 2 through September 15, 2010. Soil temperature and phenological indicators were observed on or about September 15, 2010. Accumulated GDDs represent the heating units above a 50° F baseline temperature collected via our instruments from the beginning of the current calendar year. This information is intended for use as a guide for monitoring the developmental stages of pests in your location and planning management strategies accordingly.

Region/Location	2010 GROWING DEGREE DAYS		Soil Temp (°F at 4" depth)	Precipitation (2-Week Gain)
	2-Week Gain	Total accumulation for 2010		
Cape Cod	233	2728	76°	3.50"-5.50"
Southeast	226	2695	72°	1.65"
East	290	2997	65°	0.88"
Metro West	246	2767	60°	0.89"
Central	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Pioneer Valley	233	2683	62°	0.06"
Berkshires	218	2503	58°	0.12"
AVERAGE	241	2729	66°	1.35"
n/a = information not available				

Phenology

Phenological indicators are a visual tool for correlating plant development with pest development. The following are 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)	CAPE	SOUTH EAST	EAST	METRO W.	CENT.	P.V.	BERK.
<i>Heptacodium micinioides</i> (Seven-Son Flower)	full	full	full	full	begin	*	*
<i>Clematis paniculata</i> (Sweet Autumn Clematis)	full	full	full	full	end	*	full
<i>Polygonum cuspidatum</i> (Japanese Knotweed)	f/end	full	full	full	b/full	f/end	full
* = no activity to report/information not available							

- CAPE COD REGION - Roberta Clark, UMass Extension Horticulturist for Barnstable County, Barnstable.

- SOUTHEAST REGION - Deborah Swanson, UMass Extension Horticulturist for Plymouth County - Retired, Hanson.
- EAST REGION - Kit Ganshaw & Sue Pfeiffer, Horticulturists, reporting from the Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain.
- METRO WEST REGION – Julie Coop, Horticulturist, reporting from Acton.
- CENTRAL REGION - Joann Vieira, Superintendent of Horticulture, Tower Hill Botanic Garden, Boylston.
- PIONEER VALLEY REGION - Dan Gillman, Plant Pathologist, UMass Extension Plant Diagnostic Lab, UMass, Amherst.
- BERKSHIRE REGION - Ron Kujawski, Horticultural Consultant, reporting from Great Barrington.

Woody Ornamentals

Insects

Asian Longhorned Beetle - With approximately 25,000 trees having been surveyed within the epicenter of the initial find of ALB in Jamaica Plain and **no new finds of ALB being detected**, survey work there is now being scaled back. Thus far, only 6 red maples at Faulkner Hospital, which were quickly removed and destroyed on July 6th, 2010 have been the only positive finds in that Regulated Area.

In the Worcester Regulated Area, survey work and removal of infested trees continues.

MDAR has issued the following:

"It is extremely important that we get the word out ASAP to everyone in the Boston, Brookline and Newton area to be on the lookout for:

1. Adult Asian longhorned beetles (shiny black beetles with white spots and long, banded antennae).
2. ALB exit holes (dime-sized, perfectly round holes, especially in maple, but also in birch, elm, horsechestnut, willow and other hardwood trees...but not oak).
3. ALB egg-laying sites (divots in the bark ranging in size from 1/4 to 3/4 inches across – fresh pits often have oozing, foaming sap).

Anyone seeing anything suspicious should report it immediately at <http://massnrc.org/pests/albreport.aspx> or toll-free: 1-866-702-9938. Take photos if you can.

If you are with an environmental group or other organization that needs outreach materials, we will provide you with ID cards, fact sheets, etc., for free. Just contact Jennifer Forman-Orth by phone or email: 617-626-1735 or jennifer.forman-orth@state.ma.us

Spread the word, not the beetle! Get all the latest ALB news at: <http://massnrc.org/pests/alb>

Asian longhorned beetle adults can still be active at this time. Be consciously looking for this insect, new exit holes, sawdust, and egg-laying sites. Report ASAP if found.

Viburnum leaf beetle - The adult beetles remain active but their numbers are dwindling. Treat adult beetles with a labeled pyrethroid or organophosphate insecticide if necessary.

Fall Webworm caterpillars have finished their feeding activity.

Mimosa Webworm remains active and tying together the foliage of honeylocust. If necessary, treat with a product that contains Spinosad. However, most damage from this pest has already occurred.

Red-headed Pine Sawfly larvae remain active. These yellow larvae have black spots and a rust-colored head capsule. They feed in clusters, typical of most of the pine sawfly species. If temperatures remain mild, this pest can feed well into October and cause much defoliation damage. Treat larvae with a product that contains Spinosad.

Dogwood Sawfly remains active. This larva is yellow with black spots but it is usually covered with a white pubescence that makes it resemble a bird-dropping on the foliage and stems of host plants. This pest feeds through September and can create much damage. Treat with a product that contains Spinosad.

Pearslug Sawfly remains active on such hosts as cotoneaster and ornamental plum, among others. The larvae are a shiny, black color and resemble slugs. This pest sits on top of the foliage and scrapes away leaf tissue. Large populations are capable of causing most of the foliage of the host plant to appear bronzed as if killed by fire. This insect will feed well into September. Treat with a product that contains Spinosad.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid remains dormant as nymphs settled on the small stems. Horticultural oil sprays can still be applied but manufacturers warn to avoid treatments on days where the temperatures are above 85-90 degrees. Applications of systemic imidacloprid is effective, as well, but soil applications may take 2-3 months before they are fully systemic within a large tree. Also, avoid applications while the weather is hot and dry. Feeding will resume in mid-October.

Spruce Spider Mite has returned to actively feeding on spruce, hemlock, fir and others. Inspect for building populations and treat if necessary. This cool-season mite is capable of feeding well into the autumn and creating much yellow stippling damage.

Reported by Robert Childs, Extension Entomologist, Plant, Soil and Insect Sciences Department, UMass, Amherst.

Diseases

This year there was an assortment of **leaf spot**, **conifer needle cast**, and **shoot blight diseases** on woody plants. If a severe outbreak of these diseases occurred on high value trees or shrubs, note that when

making plans for next season. Consider replacing highly susceptible plants with plants better suited for site conditions as well as disease resistant varieties/species when available. If desired, generally begin chemical control activities as buds open next spring. However, chemical treatments are most effective when used in conjunction with sanitation activities this season, which reduce inoculum levels (disease pressure) around host plants. In addition, implement cultural approaches that shorten leaf wetness periods and other opportunities for disease infection next spring.

If **dry weather** continues, trees and shrubs (especially those planted during the last 3 years or less) would benefit from once weekly soaking irrigations throughout their root zones. Allow water to run long enough it soaks 10-14 inches into soil. A few heavy soakings are much better than many light shallow sprinklings. If dryness persists, continue this activity as long as plants have foliage or until the ground freezes. In addition, maintain a 2-3 inch layer of composted mulch over as much of root zone as possible to help retain soil moisture.

Status of *Phytophthora ramorum* in 2010:

There were no new updates for 2010 reported by USDA-APHIS-PPQ at this time.

Reported by Dan Gillman, Plant Pathologist, UMass Extension Plant Diagnostic Lab, Amherst.



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