



Hort Notes[®]

An educational newsletter with research-based information for businesses and individuals involved in selling, planning, designing, servicing, and enjoying landscapes and gardens.

Certified Arborist vs. DIY

*H. Dennis P. Ryan, Ed.D, Arborist, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Department of Natural Resources Conservation, Arboriculture & Community Forestry*

We have all heard the stories of the local building contractor or homeowner who instead of hiring a legitimate tree care company managed by a Massachusetts Certified Arborist (MCA), decides to do a Do It Yourself (DIY) tree removal to save some money. Recently a call came in from a lawyer who was defending a housing contractor. The contractor asked a friend “who did tree work” to help him take down a tree that was in the way of his project. The friend climbed the tree and attached a rope to the leader to be removed. The contractor then attached the pull-line to his tractor. As the friend up in the tree cut with a chainsaw, the contractor pulled. When it was all over, the friend was on the ground dead. The contractor is being sued by the family of the deceased. It is not uncommon for the homeowner to also be sued.

A lawyer in Massachusetts sent me the following information on a case that came across his desk. Below is a reminder that the homeowner, a contractor looking to hire a sub-contractor, or a sub-contractor needs to take care of his/her own insurance needs.

AA Tree Service hired his cousin, who had her own business, to do chipper work. The tree service dropped a tree on her, resulting in her death. AATS workers comp insurance didn't cover the cousin because she was not an employee of AATS. AATS General Liability carrier doesn't have to cover her, because of independent contractor exclusion. The cousin's estate can still sue AATS, but it is unlikely that he could pay the judgment.

In this case, the cousin was a sole proprietorship, which means in many states she could not buy workers comp for herself. So she would have to have had an individual disability policy, and life insurance, to be covered. In Massachusetts, a LLP or LLC can buy workers comp for the owner/employees---but it costs money to set up and maintain these legal entities.

Before hiring a contractor to do tree work in Massachusetts, a homeowner or a contractor looking for a sub-contractor should consider the following:

- Check with the Massachusetts Arborist Association (508) 653-3320 or the Tree Care Industry Association (800) 733-2622 to make sure that the company in question is a member in good standing and qualified to do the necessary tree work.
- Check and make sure that the job site supervisor is a Massachusetts Certified Arborist.
- Ask for references that live in your area.
- Obtain proof of adequate insurance, particularly in liability and worker's compensation.
- Get all agreements for work in writing.

Finally, trust your instincts. If the tree care company makes you uneasy, get another bid.

Monitoring Checklist for the Dormant Season

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PLANT PHENOLOGY: OVER 2800 GROWING DEGREE DAYS

PLANT	PEST OR PROBLEM	GDD OR ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO DO
Hemlocks	Hemlock Woolly Adelgid <i>Adelges tsugae</i> p. 78	Now.	This insect has been dormant since mid-July and has been settled as a tiny flat-black, oval-shaped nymph with a ring of white wax around its body on the stems of host plants. It is now out of its summer dormancy and feeding with its piercing-sucking mouth through the small stems at the base of the needles. They will continue to feed and grow from now until next March whereupon they will mature and begin to produce eggs. At that time, they will be the most noticeable because the eggs are deposited in piles under a mass of white waxy strands.	Inspect with a hand lens for these tiny nymphs. Live nymphs should be somewhat plump and exude liquid when punctured with a small sharp-pointed object, such as a pin. Dead nymphs will be dry and brittle. If live nymphs are found, make note of these and treat next year during the late-winter / early spring with a horticultural oil spray or wait until early May (approximately) to apply a systemic application of imidacloprid. Unfortunately, it is too late now to treat this pest this year.
Leaf spots and blotches on broadleaf trees and shrubs	EXAMPLES: Tar spot on maple (<i>Rhytisma</i> sp.) pp. 66-67 Apple scab (<i>Venturia inaequalis</i>) pp. 86-87 Hawthorn leaf spot (<i>Entomosporium mespili</i>) pp. 78-79 Black spot on rose (<i>Diplocarpon rosae</i>) pp. 80-81 Leaf blotch on horse chestnut (<i>Guignardia</i> sp.) pp. 40-41	These fungi overwinter in infected leaves and stems. In the spring spores spread via rain, wind and splashing water to new leaves and shoots. With cool to mild temperatures and extended wet periods, spores germinate and grow into young plant parts. As leaves mature, development of waxy cuticle, etc. makes them less susceptible to infection.	Brown/black dead spots, yellowing leaves, and premature leaf loss - only infects leaves in spring. The fungus grows within leaves and tar spot symptoms are evident by summer. In contrast, the other five leaf spot/blotch diseases infect leaves in spring, but also form fruiting structures that release spores all summer. The fungi parasitize immature leaves; new spores cause more leaf spot infections during wet periods and trees prematurely shed discolored, spotted leaves.	When replacement is an option, consider gradually replacing susceptible with resistant trees. Collect and remove fallen leaves to reduce inoculum that initiates infections next spring. Make note of heavily affected weakened and high value plants this year. Next spring apply an initial protective fungicide spray, as buds break open. If wet weather persists, plan follow-up sprays to maintain protection of subsequent leaves.
Anthracnose leaf blotch, shoot blight, and canker	EXAMPLES: Ash anthracnose (<i>Discula</i> sp.) pp. 98-99 Black spot of elm (<i>Stegophora ulmea</i>) pp. 96-97 Dogwood anthracnose (<i>Discula destructiva</i>) pp. 106-107 Maple anthracnose (<i>Discula</i> and <i>Kabatella</i> sp.) pp. 110-111 Oak anthracnose (<i>Discula quercina</i>) pp. 100-101 Sycamore anthracnose (<i>Discula platani</i>) pp. 102-103 Walnut anthracnose (<i>Gnomonia leptostyla</i>) pp. 104-105	These fungi subsist during the winter within infected leaves, twigs, and as cankers on branches. In the spring, spores spread via rain, wind, and splashing water to newly developing leaves and shoots. Cool temperatures and extended wet periods stimulate spores germination and invasion of young plant parts. As leaves and shoots mature they are less susceptible to infection.	Leaf spots/blotches, shoot blight, branch/twig dieback, zigzag branching patterns, and tufts of shoot growth on branches are common symptoms. Anthracnose fruiting structures release spores well into summer, which infect wet shoots and leaves. In addition, several of the leaf blotch infections can extend into branches and stems forming cankers and causing branch dieback.	If replacement is an option, consider gradually planting resistant varieties. Rake up and destroy infected leaves. If possible, remove infected branches during the dormant season or when conditions are dry. Make note of heavily infected plants this year. Specimen and newly transplanted trees, as well as nursery stock benefit from protective fungicide treatments. Apply 2-4 sprays at 7-14 day intervals from bud break to full leaf expansion. In addition, manage oak and sycamore anthracnose with injection as per label.

The page numbers in the second column, after the pest, refer to the texts *Insects That Feed on Trees and Shrubs*, 2nd ed., Johnson and Lyon, and *Diseases of Trees and Shrubs*, Sinclair, Lyon and Johnson, Cornell University Press.

Bob Childs, Extension Entomologist
Dan Gillman, Extension Plant Pathologist

UMass Extension's Landscape, Nursery and Urban Forestry Diagnostic Lab Report

Dan Gillman, UMass Extension Plant Pathologist

The past spring, summer and early fall have been very busy in the lab. Persistent cool, rainy weather well into July resulted in many leaf spot, shoot blight, and needle cast disease infections. The following are typical disease/abiotic disorder samples received at the diagnostic lab:

Carolina hemlock — browning of mature needles with new growth looking green and healthy; toxic response to horticultural oil spray application, which evaporated too slowly due to cool, humid weather.

Arborvitae — off-colored foliage on southwest side of tree with scattered brown shoot tips; desiccation injury worsened by *Pestalotiopsis* blight.

Japanese black pine — scattered browning of needles; *Ploioderma* needle cast.

Rhododendron — leaves spotted and yellowing on several plants in a landscape; *Phyllosticta* leaf spot as well as *Pestalotiopsis* leaf blotch secondary to desiccation injury/mineral deficiency.

Apple — foliage on affected branches is pale with fewer leaves than normal and occasional branch dieback; *Botryosphaeria* canker.

Sugar maple — leaves are mostly green but have brown, curled edges as well as along veins; maple anthracnose.

American elm — tree leafed out and within last two weeks 20-30% of tree started yellowing; now leaves are brown; Dutch elm disease.

Juniper — scattered browning of foliage on the tips of scattered branches; *Phomopsis* and *Kabatina* shoot blight.

American elm — large tree had scattered branches with yellowed leaves on scattered branches in upper crown; *Dothiorella* wilt.

Goldenraintree — center to top of tree exhibits branch dieback with visible cankers on these branches; compacted soil/poorly drained site with *Botryosphaeria* and *Nectria* cankers worsening the condition of a weakened tree.

Rose — recent spring transplants with death of new ter-

minal growth moving through the large, overhead-irrigated planting; *Botrytis* blight.

Swiss stone pine — browning of needles not noticeable in June, in August moving through mature plant; brown spot needle blight.

Red oak — scattered leaf spots/blotches that just began to show up in mid July; *Tubakia* leaf spot.

American sycamore/London plane tree — scattered browning shoots/leaves; sycamore anthracnose.

Pachysandra — target-like leaf spots/dieback of shoots; *Volutella* leaf spot and canker.

Chinese chestnut — extensive leaf spotting and twig dieback; *Colletotrichum* leaf spot and *Botryosphaeria* canker.

Pitch pine — thin crown due to needle loss with new needles developing; *Lophodermium* needle cast.

White oak — leaves severely shriveled and brown; oak anthracnose.

Japanese barberry — leaves curled and blackened on container plants soon after they leafed out this spring; light frost damage with bacterial blight (*Pseudomonas syringae*).

Wilson rhododendron — large, established planting with many plants showing browned leaves and flower buds that failed to open; winter drying damage/no disease.

Apple — dead branches are overgrown with gray-green leaf-like and hair-like growths and there was concern they caused recent branch dieback; non-parasitic foliose (leaf-like) and fruticose (hair-like) lichens thriving in the sunny, moist conditions that developed after the branch died and the leaves were absent.

Euonymus — pale, brown-spotted foliage on most of several established plant in a landscape; winter drying and opportunistic *Pestalotiopsis* leaf spots exacerbating damage.

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).

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Upcoming Events

For more details and a registration form, go to www.UMassGreenInfo.org under *Conferences and Workshops*.

Extending the Research

December 2, 2009, Holiday Inn, Brockton, MA
8:30 am - 4:00 pm.

An important symposium for Green Industry professionals and municipal employees with horticultural responsibilities. Landscapers, arborists, garden center personnel, foresters, tree wardens, and state and town personnel working in pest management and public relations will all benefit from this program. For almost 100 years, UMass Extension, in collaboration with USDA and local county government, has conducted applied and basic research that addresses the needs of citizens, businesses, and public agencies in Massachusetts. This Extension conference will highlight some of that research relevant to the Green Industry. Updates on the Asian Longhorned Beetle, Winter Moth, Mile-a-minute vine, non-chemical weed control, new invasive turf pests and more to prepare Green Industry professionals to meet the challenges of the 2010 landscape season. Six pesticide contact hours available for categories 29, 36, and Applicator's License (00).

Community Tree Conference: Tree Invasives – What's Next?, March 9, 2010, UMass Amherst.

This one-day conference is designed for arborists, tree wardens, municipal managers, city planners, foresters, sugar bush owners and landscape architects who are involved with the management of property, both private and public. The University of Massachusetts Extension, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and the USDA Forest Service sponsor this annual conference. Pesticide, ISA, SAF, CFE, MCA, MCH and MCLP credits have been requested.

Weed Management for Garden Retailers

April 1, 2010, Doubletree Hotel, 11 Beaver St.,
Milford, MA, 8:30 am to 12:30 pm.

Customers commonly ask garden retailers questions about weed identification and the control of weeds in lawns, landscapes and gardens. This program will help retailers answer many of these common questions. A wide range of weed control strategies and retail products will be discussed in depth, as well as tips and resources for weed identification. Four pesticide contact hours available for categories 29, 36, 37, and 00.

Insect Laboratory: Hands-on Identification and Management Strategies, April 15, 2010, UMass

Cranberry Station, E. Wareham, MA, 9 am to 3:30 pm. Join Bob Childs, UMass Extension Entomologist, Deborah Swanson and Roberta Clark, Extension Educators, for a hands-on workshop where participants will examine actual specimens in a teaching lab with the use of microscopes. Such pests as scale insects, gall formers, spider mites, leaf miners, and much more will be examined closely with different species and life stages being identified. This is an opportunity to hone your IPM monitoring skills and to become a better IPM and Plant Health Care practitioner. Pre-registration is required, as space is limited to 30 participants. Lunch is on your own, morning coffee will be provided. Cosponsored by UMass Extension, Plymouth County Cooperative Extension, and Barnstable County Cooperative Extension. Five pesticide contact hours for categories 29, 36, and Applicator's License (00) available. ISA, MCA, MCH, and MCLP credit requested.