



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION

# HOME, YARD & GARDEN PEST NEWSLETTER

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Illinois Natural History Survey, Champaign

No. 17 • September 18, 2002

## PLANT DISEASES

### Plant Clinic Closed for Season

The University of Illinois Plant Clinic is a seasonal operation. The budget allows staff to be hired from May 1 through September 15 to handle the bulk of plant problems. Friday, September 13, was the final day for the 2002 clinic season. We will open again on May 1, 2003.

If you have a plant problem after the closing date, contact your local Extension office. If further help is needed from a specialist, Extension personnel can help direct you. The following specialists may be available for telephone questions, but **do not send samples** to them unless the specialist asks you to. There is no lab service after September 13.

*Insect problems:* Phil Nixon, (217)333-6650;

Raymond Cloyd, (217)244-7218

*Disease problems:* Nancy Pataky, (217)333-2478;

Bruce Paulsrud, (217)244-9646

*Tree/shrub problems:* David Williams, (217)333-2126

*Turf problems:* Tom Voigt, (217)333-7847

*Herbaceous plant problems:* Jim Schmidt,  
(217)244-5153

*Vegetable production:* Chuck Voigt, (217)333-1969

*Food crops:* Mosbah Kushad, (217)244-5691

*Weeds/chemicals:* Michelle Wiesbrook,  
(217)244-4397; John Masiunas, (217)244-4469  
(Nancy Pataky)

### Foliar Nematodes on Hosta

Foliar nematodes may infect hosta, causing brown areas on the leaf that are delineated by veins. The result is often a brown striping of the leaves. Large, wedge-shaped areas may appear in the leaves. Injury may occur on leaves, buds, or flowers. You won't find any fruiting bodies of fungal spores in this area; the tissue death is the result of a microscopic roundworm, a nematode. This nematode lives in the leaves and crown of the plant. It is microscopic and can be detected by teasing apart leaf tissue with forceps while observing with a dissecting microscope. Leaf tissue soaked in water overnight will yield the nematodes as well.

These nematodes reproduce within the leaves. They move in and out of the stomata and may be on the leaf surface if there is a film of water. They can be splashed or moved from plant to plant on anything wet, even on people. They may also move into the soil and cause problems for some time to come.

We discussed foliar nematodes in issue no. 8 of this newsletter with other hosta problems. In that issue, I stated that it was questionable whether the nematode could overwinter in Illinois. A hosta breeder from New Jersey wrote to tell me that the nematode can survive temperatures as low as 40 degrees below zero. He said that foliar nematodes are a huge problem to nurseries and home gardeners alike in the Northeast.

Another grower in Minnesota wrote to tell me that the nematode can survive Minnesota winters. It seems clear that the nematode can overwinter in Illinois and that we should be inspecting plants very carefully for nematode symptoms. Keep an eye out for this nematode problem, and I will keep you posted as confirmed cases are found in Illinois. (Nancy Pataky)

### Stressed Oaks

The Plant Clinic has received an unusually high number of oak samples over the last month. Most have been sent for oak wilt culturing. Although a few have been positive cases of oak wilt, the majority has been free of the oak wilt fungus. I do not believe there is a problem in sampling. Many of the negative cases have been sent on disposable ice packs as we request in hot months. Most are alive and thumb thick with at least questionable vascular streaking. In other words, samples have been excellent. It appears that the negative oak wilt diagnosis has been reliable in most cases.

Symptoms reported on these oaks include branch tip dieback, flagging of entire branches, general tree decline, and an overall lack of vigor. Leaves are often brown, but in no particular pattern. We have had complaints on red, white, bur, and pin oaks.

Anthracnose has been found on some of these cases, but anthracnose is a wet-season disease that could not possibly continue to be a problem in the drought we have experienced. This oak problem did not start until midsummer. Anthracnose does not cause this much dieback.

It is possible that bacterial scorch could be involved in a few of these cases. Bacterial scorch causes symptoms in mid- to late summer and can cause scorching and tree decline. Usually bacterial scorch increases in severity over 2 or 3 years until the tree is dead. If you suspect bacterial scorch on your oak, read through the details about that disease in issue no. 13 of this newsletter.

We suspect that many of the stressed oaks may be suffering from weather stress related to root injury. The long period of wet weather early in the season, followed by high temperatures and drought stress of 6 weeks, has undoubtedly caused some root injury. Because such stress is not easily confirmed, be certain to inspect your oaks carefully and consider some of the problems listed here. Anthracnose is discussed in issue no. 5. Oak wilt is discussed in issue no. 11. (Nancy Pataky)

## WEEDS

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### Plagued with Poison Ivy?

While doing some yard work, you come across a mysterious and uninvited viny plant. You reach for it and suddenly, that old familiar rhyme, “leaves of three, let it be,” rings in your mind, so you quickly pull away. What should you do next? How do you remove something you shouldn’t touch? The short answer is *very carefully*; I’ll cover the long answer in a moment.

First, are you sure you have poison ivy or could it be something else? Be aware other plants, such as box elder, that also have “leaves of three.” Many also mistake other vines such as Virginia creeper and trumpet creeper for poison ivy. However, when unsure, it’s certainly safest to avoid touching any poison ivy look-alike.

Poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) is a perennial that can grow as a woody vine or shrub. The leaves grow alternately up the stem. What *is* certain is that the leaves are compound—made up of three large, palmately borne leaflets. What is *not always* certain is the appearance of the leaflets. Two plants may look very different. Leaf margins may be smooth or serrate, the leaf surface may be glossy or dull, leaves may be lobed or unlobed, and color may be almost any shade of green. A typical shape is that of a mitten, but leaf shape may vary.

All of this creates much confusion, for me at least. But once all those variable leaves have dropped in the autumn, one of the best ways to quickly identify a woody vine as poison ivy is to look for the presence of numerous aerial roots on the vine. These are

reddish brown and give the vine a fuzzy appearance. You may also see the fruit, which are produced in late summer, but which can persist throughout the winter.

White flowers appear usually in May and June; and small, round, greenish to grayish white, berrylike drupes soon follow. Birds feast on this fruit and readily disperse the seed. Furthermore, poison ivy also reproduces by creeping root stocks and by stems that root where they contact the soil. Consequently, this plant is found in many parks, landscapes, woodlands, and wetlands. It thrives under a variety of conditions.

In the fall, leaves turn a gorgeous red in Illinois. In fact, this plant has been imported into a few countries for this reason. Personally, I don’t think it’s that pretty, considering the itching part. Year-round, all parts of the plant except the pollen contain a resinous compound, or “oil,” that causes itching and blistering on the skin of most people. Animals are less sensitive to this oil, but if you are sensitive to it and pet your dog or cat that has been rolling around in it, watch out! If you are washing clothes contaminated with poison ivy, be aware the oil may still be present (which can give you a rash). Don’t worry about touching someone else’s or your own rash because the oil is the only cause of the irritation. You can’t get a poison ivy rash from someone who already has the rash. Also, smoke from burning poison ivy plants can cause irritation in some people.

Poison ivy is difficult to kill, and you may need to be persistent with your control efforts. Plants may be physically removed, including the roots. However, resprouting is likely to occur if any underground parts are missed. Also, this may be too close for comfort for those who are allergic to poison ivy.

Another method that involves a little less contact with the plant is to cut off the plant at its base and treat the stump with a herbicide such as triclopyr (Ortho Brush-B-Gon, Garlon, etc.) or imazapyr (Arsenal, Stalker, etc.). It’s helpful to flag the area so you can easily check periodically for regrowth. If regrowth occurs, make a second herbicide application.

Waiting until the foliage dies down before removing it could decrease your risk of getting a rash. But keep in mind, the oil is still found on the plant a long time after it dies. If you can’t find the base of the plant or can’t get to it easily, foliar applications can be made with products labeled for this use that contain the active ingredients mentioned or dicamba (Banvel, etc.). However, if poison ivy is covering other plants, those plants are likely to be injured or killed by the herbicide.

Another consideration is soil mobility of herbicides, especially if roots of desirable plants are nearby. In this situation, glyphosate (Roundup, etc.) would be a better choice. Control can still be achieved, but soil mobility is not an issue because glyphosate is tightly bound to soil. With any product, complete control may not be achieved for a few years, and multiple applications may be necessary. Remember always to read and follow the product label.

These active ingredients may also be written on the product label as:

triclopyr, [(3,5,6-trichloro-2-pyridinyl)oxy]acetic acid  
 imazapyr, (±)-2-[4,5-dihydro-4-methyl-4-(1-methylethyl)-5-oxo-1H-imidazol-2-yl]-3-pyridinecarboxylic acid  
 dicamba, 3,6-dichloro-2-methoxybenzoic acid  
 glyphosate, N-(phosphonomethyl)glycine  
 (Michelle Wiesbrook)

## INSECTS

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### Tuliptree and Magnolia Scale

We have received several inquiries over the past week regarding tuliptree scale (*Toumeyella liriodendrii*) and magnolia scale (*Neolecanium cornuparvum*). The two scales are often mistaken for each other because they look similar. Tuliptree and magnolia scales are two of the largest scales in the United States. In addition, both are soft scales with piercing-sucking mouthparts, and both produce large quantities of honeydew. However, magnolia scale attacks only magnolia (for example, *Magnolia stellata* and *M. soulangeana*), whereas tuliptree scale has a broader host range, attacking not only magnolia but also tuliptree, walnut, and linden.

Tuliptree scale females are 1/2 inch long and vary in color from gray-green to pink-orange, with black mottling. In addition, there are ridges on the edge of the body. Females are capable of producing more than 3,000 crawlers over a period of 2 to 3 weeks in August and/or September. The crawlers are black and migrate on plants before settling on twigs in the fall. They are primarily active from August through September. Tuliptree scale overwinters as a second-instar crawler. There is typically one generation per year in Illinois.

Magnolia scale females are 1/2 inch long and red-brown in color. They are initially covered with a white, waxy powder. In August, females produce eggs, which hatch into crawlers that are gray to red. The crawlers are active primarily in September. They crawl around before settling down to feed on twig

growth. Crawlers are usually found on the undersides of 1- to 2-year-old twig growth. The crawlers eventually produce a white powdery wax covering over their bodies. Magnolia scale overwinters as a first-instar crawler. Similar to tuliptree scale, there is generally one generation a year in Illinois.

Infestations of both tuliptree and magnolia scale can cause branch dieback, rapid plant decline, and even plant death if repeated heavy populations occur. In addition, the large amount of honeydew produced by both scales may attract other insects, including wasps and ants. The honeydew also serves as a growing medium for black sooty mold fungi, which reduces the plant's ability to manufacture food through photosynthesis.

Treat for magnolia scale in late September, when the crawlers are most active. It is too late to treat for the active crawlers of tuliptree scale; however, a dormant oil spray may be performed in late fall or winter to kill the overwintering crawler stage. Pest-control materials recommended for managing both tuliptree and magnolia scale, primarily targeting the crawler stage, are acephate (Orthene), insecticidal soap, and summer oil. It is important to thoroughly cover all plant parts. In addition, maintaining plant health by proper irrigation, fertility, and mulching practices may reduce susceptibility or limit injury from both these scale pests.

Tuliptree scale is susceptible to natural enemies, including ladybird beetles; but they are not usually present in numbers high enough to provide sufficient control. (Raymond Cloyd)

### Pest Watch

Scattered reports of white grub injury have been coming in. Damage is likely, particularly during dry periods, for the next month or two in Illinois. If the fall is cold early, this time will shorten; under warm fall conditions, damage is possible in southern Illinois until Thanksgiving. Trichlorfon, sold as Dylox, is very effective where damage is already occurring. It provides control in 3 days, allowing the turf to recover quicker and the client to no longer find live grubs. *Heterorhabditis bacteriophora*, sold as Hb nematodes, is also effective against damaging grubs. Control should take 7 to 10 days and will probably be around 60%, versus 95% for Dylox. With either Dylox or Hb nematodes, water after application with at least 1/2 inch of water to flush the insecticide or worms into the root zone where the grubs live.

Zimmerman pine moth can be effectively controlled at this time. The eggs hatch in late August, but the larvae wander across the tree for a few weeks

before retreating into a hibernaculum under bark for the winter. Permethrin (Astro, Pounce) should be effective, as well as other long-lasting pyrethroids. Spray the trunk and base of major branches on Scotch, Austrian, and other pines.

Mimosa webworm is obvious, with heavy damage on honey locust throughout the state as well as on silk tree (mimosa) in southern Illinois. This insect tends to be more numerous after warmer winters because the overwintering larvae are killed by extreme conditions. Numerous insecticides are effective for control, but treatment this late in the season is usually not warranted. This late-season damage is unlikely to harm tree health, and the damaged leaves will hang on the tree whether or not the caterpillars are still there. Thus, the aesthetic damage will remain whether or not it is treated.

Dogwood sawfly has been reported from The Morton Arboretum in northeastern Illinois. Young larvae are covered with a white, waxy flocculent and are typically found curled up on the leaf. Older larvae do not have the white flocculent and are bluish green, with yellow undersides. They feed on the edges of dogwood leaves, causing some defoliation when populations are high. As with other late-season defoliators, they cause little to no damage to the health of the plant so treatment is usually not needed. Being a sawfly, it is controlled with many insecticides but not *Bacillus thuringiensis* kurstaki.

Protect yourself from West Nile virus. Although many mosquitoes carry the virus, the northern house mosquito, *Culex pipiens*, is the most likely culprit. This is an evening and morning biter that is small and

brownish. It is a quiet biter, meaning that it typically does not buzz by your ear, nor do you usually feel the bite. Protect yourself with an insect repellent containing about 30% DEET, such as Off or Cutters, particularly in the evening and early morning. This container-breeding mosquito utilizes the putrid water in clogged gutters, old tires, tin cans, abandoned swimming pools, wading pools, birdbaths, pet water bowls, and tree holes. Dumping and cleaning outdoor containers of water weekly greatly reduces the numbers of this mosquito. (*Phil Nixon*)

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*Home, Yard, and Garden Pest Newsletter* is prepared by Extension specialists from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the Illinois Natural History Survey. Information for this newsletter is gathered with the help of staff members, Extension field staff, and others. Karel Jacobs and Donna Danielson of The Morton Arboretum also provide information and articles.

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