

Number 16 - September 25, 2017

### **Late Season Caterpillars**

In late summer, it is common in Illinois to have an abundance of defoliating caterpillars on trees. Deciduous trees can cope with this damage relatively well; the loss of leaves this late in the season has little effect on tree health. For this reason, control is usually not necessary.

Leaves are most productive during the first half of the growing season and by now they have produced most of the tree's food. Trees typically do not replace leaves lost late in the growing season. If the tree produces new leaves, this represents an expenditure of energy reserves that the new leaves may not have time to replace.

**American dagger moth** larvae are white or yellow hairy caterpillars that look somewhat like woollybears, reaching 2 inches when fully grown. Towards the front and middle of the body, they have pairs of "pencils"--very long groups of black hairs that protrude well beyond the other hairs. There is also a pencil at the posterior end of the body. They feed on a variety of trees, preferring crabapple, linden, elm, maple, oak, and willow.

**Walnut caterpillars** are most common on walnut, butternut, pecan, and hickory. They are reddish, with a couple of white stripes when young, but turn black, with a couple of thin black stripes and scattered, long white hairs when

older. Fully grown caterpillars approach 2 inches in length. Its close relative, the **yellownecked caterpillar**, is similar in size and color but has many white to yellow stripes. Older, black caterpillars have a characteristic orangish to yellow "neck" behind the head. Yellownecked caterpillar feeds on the same hosts as walnut caterpillar but is also common on maple and oak. Both feed in large groups without a silk tent. They have a curious habit of descending onto the trunk and forming a large mass to molt to the next larval stage.

**Fall webworm** is very numerous this year, with their large webs over the ends of branches being very noticeable. Remember that the web is water resistant, so to achieve control use sprays with enough pressure to break inside of the web.

**Bagworms** are numerous. This late in the season, they have already laid their overwintering eggs inside the bags, so it is too late this year for insecticides to be effective. Hand picking and destroying the bags will reduce the number of caterpillars next year. (*Phil Nixon*)

### **Brown Marmorated Stink Bug Activity Increasing**

Brown marmorated stink bug is well established in several urban areas of Illinois. We've starting getting several reports a

day out of many of these areas. BMSB was first confirmed in Illinois in 2010. Since then, we have seen populations continue to increase. Throughout the last seven years, you've seen countless articles monitoring its spread and detailing its potential effects as an invasive pest.

Past Articles:

[Know this Invasive New Uninvited House Guest Fall is Officially Here](#)

As we move into fall, plants are starting to senesce and BMSB is moving around a lot more. They are becoming that nuisance pest they are so well known for.

The recommended strategy for managing BMSB is exclusion – work at keeping them out of the home by sealing cracks, crevices, repairing screens, etc. Currently the best method for removing these pests from the home is by vacuuming them or simply, I like to tell people to flush, freeze, or crush them. Dropping them in warm soapy water works as well.

We generally don't recommend foggers as the stink bugs are good at getting into places the foggers won't reach. Applying pesticide in homes may also cause additional problems as it may attract other insect that will feed on the dead BMSB.

If you are dealing with them on the outside of your home, you may want to contact a pest control company who can do a perimeter spray. This should be done when BMSB first start to appear, but it's important to note that control may be hard to achieve as they are very mobile and you can get re-infestation from others in the area later. It's also important to consider the effects of pesticides before any application occurs. Here is

some information from Rutgers University regarding perimeter sprays: <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/stinkbug/pesticides.asp>

While we rely heavily on citizen reports of this pest to help determine its distribution throughout Illinois, I am primarily concerned with areas of the state where we have not officially confirmed this pest. We, of course, are more than happy to answer questions and recommend homeowners contact their location Extension offices as well. (*Kelly Estes*)

### **Apple Scab Prevention for 2018**

Has apple scab been a problem on your crabapples this year? At this point in the season, many apples and crabapples have lost most of their leaves and appear quite bare are a result of this disease. Apple Scab is an extremely common fungal disease of apple and crabapple caused by the pathogen *Venturia inaequalis*. Symptoms first appear as olive green spots on the foliage. The spots often form along or near the leaf veins, eventually developing a dark, velvety appearance. Infected leaves also may appear curled or puckered. By mid-summer, infected leaves turn yellow, and prematurely drop from the tree. Apple scab will not kill a tree, but it has the ability to make a tree appear rather unsightly. Additionally, repeated defoliation may weaken a tree resulting in reducing growth, flowering, and increased susceptibility to other stresses. Fortunately, you have a variety of options to help reduce damage from apple scab for the 2018 growing season.

Start by removing leaf litter around your diseased trees. Fallen diseased leaves

harbor the overwintering scab fungus that will infect next year's leaves. Dispose of leaves by raking and burning. In areas where raking is not practical, use a mulching mower help to the speed decomposition of fallen leaves. Fall turf fertilization practices will further help with the decomposition process.

Prune your trees to promote good air movement through the canopy. Foliage on a properly pruned tree should dry more quickly, reducing the likelihood of infection. Proper pruning will also make it easier to obtain good coverage of canopy when applying fungicides.

Fungicide sprays effectively protect developing leaves on susceptible cultivars. Be ready to apply the first application

early in the spring, when leaves just begin to emerge from buds (about 1/4 inch green). Repeat application will be necessary to maintain protection. Re-apply according to label intervals until 2 weeks after petal fall. If the tree is free of leaf spots at that point, further treatments are unnecessary.

Intervals between sprays depend on several factors. The product's label provides a range of days between sprays. Follow the shortest labeled spray interval during periods of frequent wet weather and in plantings that had severe scab infections the previous growing season. A longer interval is acceptable during dry weather and in plantings where scab has been less of a problem. (*Travis Cleveland*)