

Number 10 - July 6, 2017

Last Weekly Issue

This is the last weekly issue of the Home, Yard, and Garden Pest Newsletter for this year. We will publish every other week through July, August, and September with a final issue in October. Insect, weed, and disease problems arise in rapid succession during the first half of the growing season, making weekly issues necessary.

Although there are important pest problems in the second half of the growing season, they develop slower and are less frequent than in the first half. Also, by the second half of the growing season, leaves have produced most of the sugars for the plant for the growing season so their loss is less harmful to plant health. Leaves have also hardened and become tougher for insects and diseases to damage. For these reasons, we can keep you up-to-date with less often issues.

Degree day timing also becomes less critical in the second half of the growing season. Degree day and phenology timing is critical early in the growing season because early and late springs cause pest susceptibility timing to vary considerably. By July, these variations have evened out through spring cool and hot spells to where calendar timing becomes much more accurate. Degree day information can still be accessed through the rest of the growing season at the web site listed in each degree day article, but

we will not be carrying that information in the newsletter. (*Travis Cleveland*)

Hosta Virus X

I am always looking for new and interesting hostas to add to my collection. However, whether I am shopping at a garden center, or offered a hosta from a neighbor's garden, I am always on the wary and on the lookout for Hosta Virus X (HVX). Unfortunately, symptoms of HVX can be quite difficult to recognize. To complicate things further, some infected plants may be asymptomatic, and not display indications of a HVX infection. As a result, that hosta you are looking to acquire may also be harboring HVX. Do not abandon your hosta collection. Rather, use caution when introducing new hostas to your garden.

As with most viral pathogens, HVX will not kill hosta; however it can cause a number of non-characteristic symptoms to appear on the host. Symptoms are usually consistent between plants of the same cultivar, but vary greatly between different cultivars. HVX often results in a change of leaf pigmentation to an either lighter or darker color. Color changes appear as mosaic, mottled, circular or "ink-bleed" (localized discoloration along the leaf veins) patterns. Other general HVX symptoms include: stunting, puckering, distortion, twisting, and necrosis. In general, avoid hosta's with features that vary significantly from those known to be

normal for healthy plants of that cultivar. Not all HVX infected plants display symptoms. Infected plants may grow several years before displaying symptoms, while others never display symptoms at all. This means that seemingly healthy hostas growing near a HVX infected hosta may be infected as well.

HVX is transmitted from plant to plant through physical or mechanical means, especially during propagation. Fortunately, most reputable nurseries screen parent plants for pathogens prior to propagation. Secondary transmission occurs when HVX infected sap is transmitted to healthy, susceptible hosta by contaminated cutting tools and/or hands. The time of year may play a role in a plant's susceptibility to HVX. Some observations suggest HVX is most easily spread during spring months when hostas are actively growing and less likely to spread after bloom.

The following practices are recommended for Hosta Virus X management.

- Avoid introducing infected plants by purchasing from reputable sources.
- Avoid Spreading HVX within the landscape
 - Transplant and divide hostas in the fall, or after they bloom.
 - Clean and sanitize tools when working with hostas, especially as you move between plants.
- Have suspected HVX plants diagnosed by a plant diagnostic laboratory.
- No chemical treatments are available. HVX infected plants should be removed immediately and destroyed.

(Travis Cleveland)

Thistle Problems

I have seen large populations of Canada thistle this summer. It is a noxious weed

in Illinois and in most states meaning that its control is required by law. If Canada thistle is growing on land that you own or manage, you are required to control it. This applies to your neighbors as well and occasionally I am asked where a person can report said neighbors. Certainly, having a friendly discussion first with your neighbors is highly recommended. Go to their front door armed with information to let them know why this weed is such a problem and how it is spreading to your property. Take brownies or a cold beverage perhaps. Take an understanding attitude and maybe even a willingness to help them.

If after meeting reporting is indeed necessary, you can contact your local county board. Some counties will have a "thistle commissioner" or similar position. Some won't have a designated weed person, however, the enforcement authority lies at the county level. There are differences from county to county. Some strictly enforce this law and others have other higher priorities. Unfortunately, counties were handed this role without strong funding to support the effort. The county will then issue a warning letter to the responsible party requiring control of Canada thistle. If control does not occur, then the county will have them controlled and the landowner will be responsible for any associated costs. Fines can be issued as well.

For more information about the Illinois Noxious Weed Law:

http://web.extension.illinois.edu/ezregs/ezregs.cfm?section=viewregs_byq&QuestionID=306&searchTerm=&ProfileID=5

<https://www.agr.state.il.us/Laws/Regs/8iac220.pdf>

Previously, I wrote about Canada thistle identification and control. The article can be accessed at:

<http://hyg.ipm.illinois.edu/article.php?id=73>.

For additional information on this weed, please see:

<http://www.inhs.illinois.edu/research/vmg/cthistle/>

<https://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/canthistle.shtml>.

(Michelle Wiesbrook)

White Grubs

This is a good time to observe the abundance and activity of white grub adults. This knowledge along with rainfall patterns is useful in making treatment decisions over the coming months.

Japanese beetle and masked chafer adults primarily lay their eggs during the first two weeks of July in central and northern Illinois. Egg-laying is finishing in southern Illinois, making this a good time to write some notes about this year's adult numbers and weather conditions.

Adult Japanese beetles are 1/2-inch-long, heavy-bodied, oval beetles that are metallic green, with coppery wing covers. Visible along the sides of the body below the wing covers is a series of white spots formed by clumps of white hair. There are two similar spots of white hair below the wing covers on the rear end of the beetle. The beetles fly when disturbed, making a buzzing sound.

They feed as adults during daylight hours on a wide range of plants, preferring smartweed, grape, raspberry, rose,

crabapple, and linden. They skeletonize leaves, feeding from the upper side of the leaf, leaving only the veins. Mating occurs in early morning and early evening, and the female burrows into the soil to lay her eggs. The adults hide in the soil from late evening through the night, remaining in the soil on cold, wet days. The adult beetles live for 4 to 6 weeks.

Masked chafer larvae are commonly called annual white grubs. There are two species that are common, and the southern masked chafer is more common in the state than the northern masked chafer. Adults are small, 1/2-inch-long June beetles that are tan, with a black marking or mask on the head. They do not feed, and a population of adults is present in an area for 2 to 3 weeks.

After hiding in the soil and thatch during the day, they emerge to mate and lay eggs at night, mostly from 10 p.m. to midnight. They are strongly attracted to lights at night, making it easy to know when they are active. They can be easily detected by shining car, car, or other vehicle lights across the turf, illuminating their mating flights.

Rainfall is the dominant factor associated with white grub abundance in Illinois in most years. Adult Japanese beetles and masked chafers are attracted to moist soil with green turf to lay their eggs which hatch into white grubs by early August. If non-irrigated turf is dry and brownish, the beetles fly to moist, green, irrigated areas to lay their eggs, resulting in high grub numbers in those areas. If non-irrigated soil is moist, the beetles will lay their eggs in most turf areas, typically resulting in few white grubs per square foot usually not requiring treatment. *(Phil Nixon)*