

Plant Health Advisor News

September 2006

Notes from the Field

Brian Hudelson, UW Extension Plant Pathology Diagnostic Clinic, calls Verticillium wilt “the disease of the summer”, number one on his top ten list. It is affecting virtually everything, according to samples he is receiving.

He reports what appears to be **cucumber mosaic virus on cucurbits, particularly zucchini**. The fruit appears very bumpy or has a mottled mosaic appearance. Leaves are very elongated and kind of “strappy.” Cucumber mosaic is an aphid transmitted virus, so this should be checked first.

Other problems:

- spruce (Black Hills) - Rhizosphaera needle cast
- apple—apple scab and Sphaeropsis canker
- maple (including Norway) - anthracnose, speckled tar spot, verticillium wilt

There is some concern that municipal mulches may be a source of verticillium, based on a graduate student’s research on chips from trees known to have the fungus.

Phil Pellitteri, UW Extension Entomologist, says spiders account for the biggest part of his samples. This is the maturing time for big web spiders. They are usually as big as a good-sized marble—large enough to scare people but basically harmless. It’s also time for cluster flies to emerge in areas that have had some rain.

To deal with **yellow jackets**, he suggests Mountain Dew and soapy water mix as a trap. However, trapping really should start in mid-July to weaken the colony over time.

Bob Tomesh, UW Horticulture Specialist, reports grapes cracking due to heat and drought and a problem of wasps feeding on them. He suggests picking the fruit in the evening when wasps are less active and agrees with Phil that control measures need to start in mid-July to be effective.

He reminds people that this is **the time to prune raspberries** that have completed bearing fruit.

People are reporting **tomatoes** that either not producing or have fruit that is not as tasty. There are also problems with cat-facing and heavy, corky centers.

Bob suspects many vegetable flowers aborted due to heat and lack of water so reduced overall production of tomatoes, peppers and even beans and peas. With recent rains and cooler temperatures, some plants may still produce.

People are asking how to tell when a **watermelon, squash** or other cucurbit is ripe. Usually there is a tendril where that fruit attaches to the vine node and when ripe, that tendril begins to brown. This is a good indicator that it can be picked.

Pumpkins are ripening sooner than usual due to excessive heat so may be ready before Halloween! They do not have to be harvested until there is a frost threat.

Perennials, especially spring and summer flowering plants, can be transplanted this month. September is also a good time to transplant pines, from now until the 15th or 20th.

Many **broadleaf plants** (dandelions, some of the winter mustards such as shepherd’s purse, etc.) are beginning to germinate. Defer broadleaf weed management until a bit later in the season.

This is a good time to remove **buckthorn** and treat the stumps with some type of brush killer herbicide or broadleaf shrub killer.

Plant Health Updates

Currently-active, newly-trained and potential PHAs are invited to Sharon Morrisey’s bi-weekly training updates at the Milwaukee County UWEX office. She will cover current problems, trends being reported, and questions you may be asked.

Wednesdays, 6:00– 7:00 pm

September 13 & 27
Wrap up—October 11

Plant Diagnostic Outreach

The season is coming to an end with our last outreach dates Saturday, September 9, at Havenwoods and Thursday, September 14, at Boerner Botanical Gardens. A special thank you to all who traveled to our sites that also included Milwaukee Public Market and Fox Point Farmers Market.

We have been in contact with more than 100 people during this time. Some came prepared with specimens to be identified and problems solved and some had general gardening questions. All were very appreciative of our help including referrals to our horticulture helpline service, web site, etc.

A thank you too to everybody who helped in the UWEX horticulture helpline offices during these busy summer months. And the season is NOT over and your help is still needed!

LOOKING AHEAD

In 2007 the Quad Counties will serve the public's plant diagnostic needs with expanded hours at Boerner Botanical Gardens using the Diagnostic Room in the lower level. This replaces previous outreach at other sites. Hours will be determined by volunteer availability. We will be refining this project over the winter so watch for more details! Also, look forward to another PHA training session in the spring.

Need Help?

Don't forget you can access four specialized clinics – The Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic, The Insect Diagnostic Lab, The Soil and Plant Analysis Lab and The Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab. **Clients may go to clinic websites but the following information is for use by Plant Health Advisors and not the general public.**

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www.entomology.wisc.edu/entodiag.html

The Soil and Plant Analysis Lab
8452 Mineral Point Road
Verona, WI 53593
(608) 262-4364
uwlab.soils.wisc.edu

Steve Abler
The Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab
O. J. Noer Turfgrass Facility
3101 Highway M
Verona, WI 53593
(608) 845-2535
swa@plantpath.wisc.edu
www.plantpath.wisc.edu/tddl/tddl/tddl.htm

Other helpful sites:

Anthracnose <http://www.plantpath.wisc.edu/pddc/factsheets/ANTHASHLC.DOC>

Apple Scab <http://www.plantpath.wisc.edu/pddc/factsheets/ScabAppIbLC.DOC>

Tar Spot <http://www.plantpath.wisc.edu/pddc/factsheets/TarSpotLC.doc>

Cluster flies <http://commerce.uwex.edu/pdfs/A2090.PDF>

Cucumber mosaic virus <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/3000/3109.html>

Early blight <http://www.plantpath.wisc.edu/pddc/factsheets/EarlyBltLC.pdf>

Emerald Ash Borer www.entomology.wisc.edu/emeraldashborer

Oak wilt disease <http://s142412519.onlinehome.us/uw/pdfs/G3590.pdf>

<http://www.plantpath.wisc.edu/pddc/factsheets/OAKWILT.DOC>

Powdery Mildew <http://www.plantpath.wisc.edu/pddc/factsheets/PM.doc>

Septoria <http://www.plantpath.wisc.edu/pddc/factsheets/SeptLSLC.pdf>

Verticillium wilt <http://www.plantpath.wisc.edu/pddc/factsheets/VertWiltLC.pdf>