

Christmas Tree Scouting

Report #8 – 5/13/09

Weekly newsletter compiled by Sarah Pickel,
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This week's report includes scouting information from: Jim Fogarty (Halabura Tree Farm), Karen Najda (PDA), Brian Schildt (PSU), Linda Signarovitz and Cathy Thomas (PDA).

Growing degree day totals as of May 12th are 220.5 in New Ringgold, Schuylkill County and 323 in Elizabethtown, Lancaster County.

This week, the nymphs of Pine Bark Adelgid have hatched and moved on to the expanding candles of new growth on Eastern white pine in York County. These will appear as dark blue-green specks on the new twigs. The adults of this population are covered in white wax and can be found on the main trunk [Figure 1] of the



Figure 1: Pine Bark Adelgid on Eastern White Pine [Brian Schildt, PSU]

tree or on last season's twigs. In severe cases, this gives the tree a white washed look. In most cases it is not a major pest. In heavier cases, this can be treated with an insecticide at

this time, while the nymphs are still exposed. Another control option is applying dormant oil in the fall, or spring, before the new growth has begun to sprout.

Eriophyid mite damage has shown up on Eastern white pine in Dauphin County this week. This damage



Figure 2: Eriophyid Mites on Eastern White Pine [PDA]

gives the needles a washed out or slightly rusty appearance. [Figure 2] Despite being considered a cool season pest, these mites are still active and feeding, so it may be necessary to make a control treatment. Growers should be cautious about using oil to treat for these mites at this time of year. There is potential for burning the new growth, however, if made early in the day, during cool temperatures, growers could see good results. Oil products should not be used on Colorado blue spruce for Eriophyid control, because the oil will reduce the blue color from the needles.

Spruce spider mites are also still active in Schuylkill and York Counties. Most life stages are still present, so growers should consider using miticides products that target the juvenile and egg stages of this mite. To see a list of miticides registered for use on Christmas trees in Pennsylvania, go to the Penn State Christmas tree website located at <http://ctrees.cas.psu.edu>.

Crawlers of the Pine needle scale have still not been seen in York or Cumberland Counties.



Figure 3: Pine Needle Scale Crawlers [Sandy Gardosik, PDA]

Growers may see the tiny, dark red crawlers [Figure 3] hatched some time next week. While this pest can be found on several conifer species, it is mostly a concern for growers of Scotch and White Pine. Once hatched, these scale nymphs can be treated with two applications of horticultural oil (while remembering to make applications during cool temperatures to prevent burn), insecticidal soaps or insecticides.

Gypsy moth larvae can be found on some conifers at this time. While they prefer to feed on deciduous trees, they can do some feeding damage to conifer species. Some damage was seen on Douglas fir in York County. If growers find a significant population in their tree blocks, they may want to consider applying a control treatment. While the larvae

are still relatively small, an application of *Bacillus thuringiensis* subsp. *Kurstaki* could give effective control. (See Insecticide & Miticide sheet for product names.) This pest is also an important regulatory pest. For growers who ship trees across county or state lines, scouting for this pest is especially important.

Last Friday, Spruce Needle Rust fruiting bodies were beginning to sporulate on Blue spruce in Schuylkill County. This may also be found on Serbian and White spruce. The orange or rust colored bands encircling the needles will rupture and release spores during wet conditions. Growers made their first application of fungicide this week. The recommended spray schedule for this disease is like the schedule for Rhabdocline Needle cast on Douglas Fir. The first spray is made at bud break and is followed by a spray one week later, and another spray two weeks after that.

Growers in Schuylkill County have applied their second fungicide spray to Douglas fir for Rhabdocline Needle cast this week. They will have one more spray to go unless they also have Swiss Needle cast. This disease displays



Figure 1: Rhabdocline and Swiss Needle casts [Tracey Olson, PDA]

rows of tiny black specks, or fruiting bodies, on the undersides of the needles. [Figure 4] In that case, a fourth spray should be applied three weeks after the third spray.