

# Christmas Tree Scouting

## Report #10 – 5/27/09

Weekly newsletter compiled by Sarah Pickel,  
PA Department of Agriculture

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 for this week are as follows: in Elizabethtown, Lancaster County, the total is 524.5 as of May 26<sup>th</sup>; in New Ringgold, Schuylkill County, the total is 375 as of May 25<sup>th</sup>; and in Susquehanna County, the total is 268 as of May 26<sup>th</sup>.

This week in York County, Cryptomeria scale eggs were found when the scale covers were removed on Canaan and Fraser Fir.

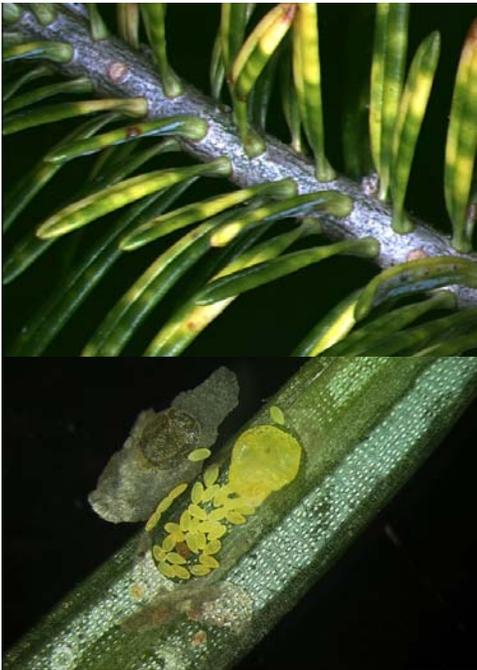


Figure 2: Cryptomeria scale damage (above), Female scale with eggs [Sandy Gardosik]

trees. Growers can scrape off the white scale covers with a finger nail and can view the bright yellow, jelly bean shaped eggs with a hand lens. These eggs were not yet present in Schuylkill County. The scale crawlers can be expected to hatch from the eggs within

scale, which resembles an egg, will be found on the undersides of the needles of true firs and occasionally spruces and Douglas fir. Look for a yellow mottling on the upper surface of the needles near the base of the

approximately 10-14 days after the eggs were laid. These crawlers are vulnerable to insecticides or horticultural oil before they begin to form their protective covering. When crawlers are observed, growers should begin to apply controls. The accepted treatment schedule for this scale is 2-3 sprays, 1-2 weeks apart. There will be a second generation of this pest in early August. Growers who do not achieve good control for the first generation may need to apply a second round of treatments for the second generation.

Scale crawlers of pine needle scale were observed moving on the needles of Scotch pine this week in northern York County.

They were not yet hatched from the eggs in Cumberland or Dauphin Counties. These crawlers are a faded red color, are flat and oval shaped, and can be viewed with a hand lens. Look for them on or near needles with adult scales, which are white and elongate. The control recommendation for this pest is two sprays one week apart.



Figure 3: Pine needle scale crawlers [Sandy Gardosik]

Spruce Spider Mites were still active in Dauphin County. The cool spring weather this year may be extending the feeding time of this "cool season" pest. Growers may want to scout fields that were sprayed earlier in the spring to evaluate whether to apply further control.



Figure 1: Syrphid Fly larva [Lynette Schimming, Fort Bragg, NC]

Growers may be noticing damage from balsam twig aphid on true firs at this time, or may see the aphids feeding at the tips of the new growth, but any sprays applied now will not curb

the damage. Also, sprays at this time will kill any beneficial insects that may be feeding on the aphids. This week in York County, Syrphid Fly, or Hover Fly, larva were observed feeding on balsam twig aphids. This beneficial insect will feed on several varieties of plant pests.

Spruce Needle Rust continues to sporulate in Schuylkill County. This disease of Colorado blue, Serbian and White spruces is visible as yellow-orange bands encircling the needles. Trees that are planted close together and in shady spots may be more likely to develop the disease. Growers should be continuing with the fungicide spray schedule they began. If a grower has not applied any fungicide yet, at this point it is too late to prevent infection. This also applies to the spray schedules for Rhabdocline and Swiss needle casts.

*The next scouting report will be available on June 3, 2009.*