PENNSYLVANIA'S CHRISTMAS TREE SCOUTING REPORT
MARCH 22, 2012

Weekly newsletter compiled by Sarah Pickel, PA Department of Agriculture.

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GDD TOTALS AS OF TUESDAY, 3/20/12:

LOCATION	GDD TOTAL
Elizabethtown, Lancaster County	101.5
Hallstead, Susquehanna County	53.0
New Cumberland, York County	100.5
New Ringgold, Schuylkill County	80.5

Warm temperatures continue across the state this week and pest continue with their early activity.

WEEVILS

In Hallstead, Susquehanna County this week, white pine weevil feeding damage was found on the leaders of Douglas-fir. Weevils were also found in traps in northern and southern York County. We began seeing weevils in traps last week in Lancaster County, so weevils have now been active for two weeks in the southern counties of the state. Two weeks is the window needed for weevils to begin laying eggs, so growers who found weevils two weeks ago should have made their insecticide application to the upper 1/3 of host trees. The weevils favored hosts are Serbian spruce and white pine, but other spruces, pines and occasionally Douglas-fir may also be hosts of this pest. If weevils continue to be found in traps after the first insecticide application, growers may want to make a second application. Information on white pine weevil and its life cycle can be found here: http://ento.psu.edu/extension/factsheets/pdf/whitePineWeevil.pdf/view.

Figure 2: Weevils in top of a Teddars trap (cover removed) [S. Gardosik, PDA]

One other weevil growers may expect to find in their emergence traps at this time is the Pales weevil. This dark brown weevil is larger than the white pine weevil, at about 6-10 mm. These weevils emerge as adults to feed on the twigs of pines and occasionally other conifer species. The symptom of this feeding is flagged branches. Growers who have had a problem with this weevil in the past should make a point to remove any Scotch pine stumps left in the field from this past Christmas season. The weevils will lay their eggs in these stumps. Removing the fresh stumps should take care of this pest issue for future seasons.

Figure 1: Pales weevil damage to Eastern white pine [B. Schildt, PDA]

ERIOPHYID (RUST) MITES

In Northampton Counties, rust mites were hatched and active on Colorado blue spruce. In Schuylkill County they were active on Colorado spruce and Concolor fir as well. Last week, in

York County, they were found to be active on Norway spruce. Eriophyid mites can be found on spruces, firs, hemlocks, and pines. To find these mites, use of a hand lens with 16x or greater magnification is necessary. Also, scouting on a slightly cloudy day will make it easier to spot trees that are faded or rusty in color. Controls for these mites may be applied any time after hatch. If the population is heavy, consider treating with a miticide. Carefully check the label, as not all miticides are effective against Eriophyid mites. For more information, visit: http://extension.psu.edu/ipm/program/christmas-tree/pest-fact-sheets/needle-discoloration-and-injury/eriophyid-rust-sheath-mites.pdf/view.

Figure 3: Eriophyid mites on spruce [PDA]

SPIDER MITES

On Arborvitae in Schuylkill County today, spider mites were found to be active. There are several species of spider mites that can be found on this host. Spruce spider mite, two spotted spider mite and arborvitae spider mite are all common to arborvitae hosts. The most common spider mite found on Christmas trees is the spruce spider mite. Hosts include spruces, firs, arborvitae, and Douglas-fir. Although it is earlier in the season than these mites typically hatch, growers should consider looking at their trees this week to see if the tiny, spherical, red eggs, which can be found along the twigs, have hatched. A hand lens is also necessary for viewing this pest. The newly hatched nymphs will be somewhat orange in color. As they mature, their body coloring will darken to brown. The time to apply controls for these mites is after the majority of nymphs have hatched from the overwintering eggs. For more information on spruce spider mites, visit: http://extension.psu.edu/ipm/program/christmas-tree/pest-fact-sheets/needle-discoloration-and-injury/spruce-spider-mite.pdf/view.

Figure 4: Newly hatched spruce spider mites with eggs around needle bases [B. Schildt, PDA]

LOOKING AHEAD

In the next few weeks, growers can look for a continuing hatch of spruce spider mites and should also be planning to look for balsam twig aphids to hatch from overwintering eggs on true firs. More information on these pests will be available in next week's report.

For your reference, a list of Pennsylvania's registered miticides and insecticides, entitled *2011 Insecticides and Miticides for Christmas Tree Pests,* can be found at the Penn State Christmas tree Website, http://ento.psu.edu/extension/christmas-trees,.

The next scouting report will be available March 28, 2012.