

PENNSYLVANIA'S CHRISTMAS TREE SCOUTING REPORT

MARCH 28, 2013

Weekly newsletter compiled by Sarah Pickel, PA
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GROWING DEGREE DAY TOTALS, 3/27/13:

LOCATION	GDD TOTAL
Conoy Twp, Elizabethtown (SW), Lancaster Co.	3.5
Mount Joy Twp, Elizabethtown (NE), Lancaster Co.	0
Hallstead, Susquehanna Co.	0
New Cumberland, York Co.	0
New Ringgold, Schuylkill Co.	1

Temperatures across the mid-state remained cool this week. As a result of this, insect activity was light and pest activity was essentially non-existent.

WEEVIL MONITORING

There were no white pine weevils found in traps this week in Lancaster, Schuylkill and York Counties. This was to be expected, since the minimum end of the growing degree day range for white pine weevil emergence from overwintering sites has not been reached yet. The accepted GDD range in which this occurs is 7-58 GDD. Growers who have not yet set-up traps and intended to, still have time to do so. For best results, place two traps per block of host trees and try to put traps next to trees that had weevil damage (leader die-back) the previous season. Susceptible trees are pines, spruces and



Figure 1: White pine weevil adult [S. Pickel, PDA]

Douglas-fir. Preferred hosts are generally Serbian spruce and Eastern white pine. Weevils are most likely to emerge in the warmest blocks of trees, often those on a southern facing slope. Monitor these traps several times a week.

There may be a few types of weevils found in the traps, so it is important to know that white pine weevils will be <math><1/4\text{''}</math> long and will be a mottled brown color with both white and rust colored spots near the back of their wing covers. (See Figure 1). When weevils appear in the traps, it is a good idea to apply a labeled insecticide to the top 1/3 of the susceptible trees.

When weevils are found on a farm, control measures should be taken to prevent damage. An appropriate insecticide should be applied to the upper 1/3 of the trees within 2 weeks of the first weevil trapping. This is important because weevils will begin laying eggs within the leaders after two weeks. The insecticide should be on the leaders before that egg laying occurs. If weevils are still being caught after this first application, growers may need to make a second application a week to 10 days after the first.

MITE SCOUTING

Again this week, there was not yet any **Eriophyid mite** activity observed at locations in Lancaster, Schuylkill and York Counties. In warmer areas of the state, these mites may already have hatched from their overwintering eggs. These tiny mites are called rust mites when found on spruces, firs and hemlocks, and are called sheath mites when found on pines. Salmon colored



Figure 2: Eriophyid mites on Eastern white pine [S. Pickel, PDA]

overwintering eggs will be clustered together on the undersides of needles very close to the needle bases. Oblong mites will hatch in a GDD range of 7-22 and will be off-white to peach in color. Scout for these mites on twigs where the foliage has a rusty or gray appearance. If mites are found on 80% of the twigs sampled, then treatment may be necessary. Apply a dormant oil prior to bud break or a miticide with rust mites listed on the label. For more information on this pest, visit:

<http://extension.psu.edu/ipm/program/christmas-tree/pest-fact-sheets/needle-discoloration-and-injury/eriphyid-rust-sheath-mites.pdf/view>.

This is also a good time to begin scouting trees that may have a problem with **Spruce Spider Mites**. Although these mites will not hatch for a few more weeks (the GDD range for spruce spider mite hatch is 50-121), growers can scout to find



Figure 3: Spruce spider mite damage
[E.Day, Virginia Tech, Bugwood.org]

areas with damage from last season. The damage symptom for this mite is yellowed stippling on the upper surface of needles. This yellowing will be concentrated close to the stem, giving the twig an appearance of having a thicker stem. In trees with a heavy infestation, the twigs may also be covered in fine webbing. On the underside of these twigs, red overwintering eggs will be found on the bark nestled among the needle bases (visible with a hand lens). Trees where spider mite eggs were found should be marked so growers can return to monitor for egg hatch throughout the month of April. For more info on this pest, visit:
<http://extension.psu.edu/ipm/program/christmas-tree/pest-fact-sheets/needle-discoloration-and-injury/spruce-spider-mite.pdf/view>.

HELPFUL RESOURCE

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 April 4, 2013.