



PENNSYLVANIA'S CHRISTMAS TREE SCOUTING REPORT

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2015

Weekly newsletter compiled by Sarah Pickel, PA Department of Agriculture. This week's scouting data contributors: Sarah Pickel and Brian Schildt (PDA).

GROWING DEGREE DAY TOTALS, 3/25/15:

LOCATION	GDD TOTAL
Indiana, Indiana Co.*	0
Montoursville, Lycoming Co.*	0
Mount Joy Twp, Elizabethtown (NE), Lancaster Co.	3.5
New Cumberland, York Co.	0

* Figure courtesy of www.weather.com.

Hello, readers! This is the first scouting report of the 2015 scouting season. While the calendar officially says spring, I know for many readers receiving this newsletter, winter still seems to be present in your fields. Despite that fact, it is important to prepare for the 2015 growing season and the insects that will become active on your Christmas trees before we know it. Last week, PA IMP program scouting team members were out placing white pine weevil traps in fields that in some cases, still had spots of snow in them.

Another activity we began this month was the monitoring of daily temperature, starting on March 1st. We do this monitoring to track the accumulation of Growing Degree Days (GDDs), a measurement of daily heat accumulation. (Two locations are monitored via <http://www.yourweekendview.com/outlook/agriculture/growing-degree-days/>. You can track local temperatures in your area with this site, although nothing is more accurate than on farm monitoring with a maximum/minimum thermometer.) Thus far, only one location that we monitor has accumulated any GDDs, but temperatures will soon rise and GDDs will begin to add up. The pests we'll be scouting for this season all have a GDD range during which they typically emerge. This information will be shared about the pests we report on, along with current pest activity, life cycle details and management options. Pest activity information will mostly be from the south-central

Pennsylvania region, but occasionally information from other PA regions will be available.

WHITE PINE WEEVIL MONITORING

As mentioned earlier, the PA IPM team has set up white pine weevil traps in several locations. These traps are intended to attract the destructive beetle pests, white pine weevils when they emerge from their overwintering sites in the needle litter underneath various species of Christmas trees. White pine weevil is typically the first insect pest of Christmas trees to emerge in the spring.



Figure 2: White pine weevil adult [S. Pickel, PDA]

Weevils can be expected to be found in traps or on the leaders of trees within the range of 7-58 GDD, or when soil temperatures reach 50°F.

The damage caused by White pine weevils is leader dieback in host trees. Hosts of this insect include eastern white pine and other pine species, Serbian spruce and other spruce species, and occasionally Douglas-fir. Adult beetles are approximately 1/4 inch long and brown with white and rust colored spots. They emerge in early spring, move to the leaders of trees too feed first, then to mate and lay eggs inside the leaders. Droplets of sap coming from small holes on the leaders are evidence of weevil feeding.



Figure 1: Leader dieback on Serbian Spruce caused by white pine weevil [S. Pickel, PDA]

If growers have had damage from white pine weevil on their farms before and would like to determine if or when the weevils will emerge on their farms, trapping is the best way to determine this. Pyramidal traps sold as Whalon Modified Tedder's traps are available for online purchase from Great Lakes IPM (www.greatlakesipm.com), or visit <http://extension.psu.edu/ipm/program/christmastree/appendixes/insect-traps.pdf/view> for construction instructions. These traps need to be baited with separate vials of denatured alcohol and turpentine to be effective. Traps should be placed in susceptible blocks at this time in the season and monitored several times a week.

If weevils are caught in the trap, it's recommended to make an insecticide application to the top third of the trees very soon after weevils are found. If weevils continue to be found in traps several days after the first application, growers may want to consider making a second application 7-10 days after the first.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

For a list of control options for insect and mite pests, the most recently updated list of Insecticides & Miticides for PA Christmas Tree Pests can be found at the following link: <http://ento.psu.edu/extension/christmas-trees/publications/2013%20Christmas%20Tree%20Insecticides-Miticides.pdf>.

The next scouting report will be available Thursday, April 2, 2015.