



PENNSYLVANIA'S CHRISTMAS TREE SCOUTING REPORT

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 2015

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

GROWING DEGREE DAY TOTALS, 8/19/15:

LOCATION	GDD TOTAL
Indiana, Indiana Co.*	2,176
Montoursville, Lycoming Co.*	2,376
Mount Joy Twp, Elizabethtown (NE), Lancaster Co.	2,793.5
New Cumberland, York Co.	2,608.5

* Figure courtesy of www.weather.com.

2ND GENERATION OF CRYPTOMERIA SCALE

The Cryptomeria scale crawler emergence continues in Central PA. While crawlers have been moving and settling on foliage of host trees (true firs, spruces and occasionally Douglas-fir) for the past two weeks in Dauphin, Lancaster, Lebanon and York Counties, they were first spotted out on foliage in Northampton and Schuylkill Counties this week. The crawler emergence can stretch out over 3-4 weeks (sometimes longer).

Finding Cryptomeria scale crawlers can be a challenge because of their small size. The adult scale coverings, which resemble a fried egg, are about 1 – 1.5 mm in size (1mm= the thickness of a credit card). The crawlers are about ¼ of that size. That's very small, and while visible with a hand lens, they can be difficult to find. Remember that crawlers could be moving along the needles, so move your hand lens around to look at different needles. When scouting, keep the focus on the lower, interior branches of a tree where an infestation is most likely to begin.



Figure 1: Adult *Cryptomeria* scale (lower left) with an active crawler (upper right) and settled crawler (lower right). [S. Pickel, PDA]

In most areas of south central PA, growers who have a scale issue should have already made one application of an insecticide. These applications should be followed up with a 2nd application 7-10 days later. After an application is made, growers should monitor the scale population to see if there are still active crawlers present that would require an additional application. Some growers have found success with making a single application of the chemical spirotetramat (Movento, Kontos) per generation; however, this has not been tested by research in PA and the label does allow for multiple applications. (Also, the label requires that this product be applied with a spreader/sticker product.)

SPRUCE SPIDER MITES

This week in Schuylkill County and last week in York County, a resurgence of spruce spider mites was seen in Fraser fir. After flaring up in the spring, these mites typically die back in the peak temperatures of the summer, but populations can bounce back as fall approaches. Look for these mites on the underside of twigs that show yellowing or browning at the base of the needles. In heavier cases, there will also be a build-up of fine webbing. The mites can still cause damage to the foliage at this time, so if the numbers are high enough (i.e. 10 mites/twig), a miticide application could be appropriate.



Figures 2 & 3: Spruce spider mite damage (top); spruce spider mite nymphs (bottom). [S. Pickel, PDA]

FALL SCOUTING ACTIVITY

As we near the end of the summer, I'd just like to remind you of some pest management activities that can be done at this point in the season, as

opposed to in spring. For growers who have issues with spruce gall, I'd like to remind you that the best time for getting control of these pests is the fall. For both Cooley spruce gall adelgid (which affects Colorado blue spruce and Douglas-fir) and Eastern spruce gall adelgid (Norway spruce), making an insecticide or horticultural oil application (Do not apply oil to Colorado spruce!) after the overwintering nymphs have settled at the bases of the buds in late September – early October will provide the most effective control.

Also for Balsam twig aphid, the pest which causes the newly expanding needles of true firs to twist in the spring, can be effectively controlled with a single insecticide application in the fall. Growers should still scout in the spring before bud break to ensure that control was achieved.

This will be the final scouting report of the season. Look for the 2016 reports to begin in March.

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>.