PENNSYLVANIA'S CHRISTMAS TREE SCOUTING REPORT

FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2017

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

GROWING DEGREE DAY TOTALS FROM 5/25/17:

LOCATION	GDD TOTAL
Elizabethtown, Lancaster Co.	591.5
Indiana, Indiana Co.	487
Montoursville, Lycoming Co.	471.5
New Cumberland, York Co.	652
New Ringgold, Schuylkill Co.	562

** Figures courtesy of www.accuweather.com.*

BAGWORM

This morning in Dauphin County, just a few very young bagworm larvae were found outside of the

overwintering cases on Colorado blue spruce. This hatch typically happens between 650 and 750 GDD. The emergence had just begun because there were still larvae and eggs inside the case. You could still find the fine strands of silk the larvae used to exit the cases hanging from the ends of the cases. In fact, the larvae that were seen on the needles had not yet begun to build their protective cases. Without their cases, the larvae are tan with black heads and black on the first few segments behind the head. They are very tiny also – less than 1/8 in. When they begin to feed, they start to build a cone-like case, made of pieces of needles, which they carry with them.

Bagworms can be found on any conifer species. This caterpillar pest has one generation per year. The larvae, or bagworms, will feed throughout the summer and as they increase in size, they continue to build up their cases from needle pieces. When the bagworms begin to feed in the spring, they will eat parts of the needles, causing brown, ragged areas of the needles. As the bagworms grow, however, they will eat whole needles and are capable of stripping whole twigs of their needles. In early fall, the male bagworms will pupate and emerge from their cases as moths. The moths will mate with the female larvae still in the cases. Those females develop eggs, which remain inside their bodies throughout the winter. In the late spring/early summer, the eggs hatch into larvae to begin the cycle all over again.

To prevent feeding damage from this pest, an insecticide can be applied when larvae are still small, but when the majority have exited the cases. In smaller populations, bagworms may be picked by hand later in the season if control is not achieved at this time.

CRYPTOMERIA SCALE

This week, eggs were just beginning to be seen under a few off-white scale covers of Cryptomeria scale in parts of Dauphin and Schuylkill Counties. In other areas, including some parts of Schuylkill County, the round, bright yellow female scales (also found under the off-white scale covers) had started to swell. This is an indication that egg laying is not far off. This hard scale pest can be found on mainly firs, spruce, and hemlocks,

although it could be found on any conifer. The scales will be found on the bottom portion of the tree, close to the trunk of the tree. Look for scales on the underside of yellow speckled needles. Growers will need to scrape the scale coverings away using a finger nail or a pin to find the eggs underneath. The formation of eggs is significant because about two weeks after the eggs first appear, crawlers will begin to hatch and emerge from underneath the female scale covers. The crawlers are the stage most vulnerable to insecticide sprays. When the crawlers begin to hatch, growers can apply an insecticide for control at that time. For more information on this pest, visit: http://extension.psu.edu/pests/ipm/program/christmas-tree/pest-fact-sheets/needle-discoloration-and-injury/cryptomeria-scale.pdf/view

Additional Resource

More information on Christmas tree pests and production is available at the PSU Department of Entomology's Christmas tree site: http://ento.psu.edu/extension/christmas-trees.

The next scouting report will be available Friday, June 2, 2017.