Welcome to the UConn Nursery and Landscape Update! We will feature ornamental plant pests (insects, mites, diseases, and weeds) recently found in nurseries, garden centers, and landscapes during Integrated Pest Management (IPM) monitoring visits in Connecticut; beneficial organisms observed; and other relevant updates for the green industry.

**WINTER DAMAGE ON BROADLEAVED AND NEEDLEDE EVERGREENS**

Winter damage from desiccation and wind is being reported New England. Damage is evident on many evergreen shrubs, particularly rhododendrons. The cold winter winds, dried out leaves so that they now look brown and brittle. Such desiccation is often occurs in winter because the roots can’t bring up more water to replace moisture lost from leaves when the ground is frozen. Broad, flat leaves, such as those on rhododendron have a lot of leaf surface area that can lose moisture when it’s cold and windy. Winter injury can be evident on single branches or larger sections of a mature plant. Other evergreen shrubs, especially junipers and arborvitae, have also been affected this year.

The frequency and severity of winter damage is determined by a number of factors, including the plant species or cultivar involved, the location and conditions under which the plant is grown, and the exact timing of weather extremes during the dormant period. Contrary to popular belief, plant damage is not generally caused by an unusually cold winter. Low temperature injury is more often associated with extreme temperature fluctuation than with prolonged cold weather.

**MINIMIZING WINTER INJURY:**

- Avoid late-summer fertilization or pruning, which might stimulate new growth.
- Water trees and shrubs, especially evergreens, during dry periods until the ground freezes.
- Use mulch to conserve soil moisture and insulate the roots from cold temperatures.
- Protect evergreens from wind and salt spray with burlap screens.
- Apply anti-desiccant to evergreens starting in late fall, following label instructions.

*Winter desiccation of rhododendron*  
Photo: Richard Buckley, Rutgers PDL
DISEASES

Boxwood Blight
This devastating disease is caused by the fungus *Cylindrocladium buxicola*. Symptoms first appear as leaf spots followed by rapid browning of the leaf and subsequent leaf drop. The decline is first observed on the lower branches and it moves upward into the canopy.

There are other boxwood diseases that can be confused with boxwood blight. That’s why diagnosis is important. The key symptoms that differentiate Boxwood Blight from other boxwood diseases, such as Volutella Blight and Macrophoma Leaf Spot, are numerous narrow black cankers (black streaks) that develop on the green stems. The pathogen does not attack the roots, so larger plants may produce new leaves during the growing season, but may lose ornamental value as defoliation becomes severe. Repeated defoliation and dieback from stem cankers has killed small rooted cuttings in nursery propagation. The causal fungus can remain alive in fallen leaves which can then serve as the source of infection for subsequent years.

More information on Best Management Practices in CT for Boxwood Blight
For Commercial Public and Residential:

For Production and Retail Nurseries:

INSECTS

GYPSY MOTHS (*Lymantria dispar*) It’s time to keep an eye out for small, young caterpillars.

Gypsy moth egg hatch typically occurs between 90-100 Growing Degree Days which usually occurs around the first week in May in Connecticut. After egg hatch, groups of tiny gypsy moth caterpillars may remain on their egg mass just before crawling to the canopy of their host plant, where they can disperse using a technique known as “ballooning”. Ballooning occurs when very young caterpillars spin a silken thread and catch the wind to blow onto a new host plant once the thread breaks. This method of dispersal can lead to host plants becoming defoliated that previously did not have egg masses directly on them.

For more information on Gypsy Moths:
http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/FactSheets/gypsy-moth.php
EASTERN TENT CATERPILLARS (*Malacosoma americanum*) eggs hatch between 90-190 GDD’s, base 50°F, which typically coincides with unfolding cherry leaves in the spring. Egg masses of *Malacosoma americanum* vary from those of *Malacosoma disstria*, the forest tent caterpillar, as they have a rounded edge whereas *M. disstria* egg masses have square edges. Scout for and remove eastern tent caterpillar egg masses prior to hatch on susceptible hosts such as cherry and crabapple. Other host plants impacted by this native insect can include apple, ash, birch, willow, maple, oak, poplar, and witch-hazel. For more information on tent caterpillars:

**UPCOMING PROGRAMS**

**JUNE 19, 2019**

Greenhouse Biological Control Conference
Jones Auditorium, The CT Agriculture Experiment Station
New Haven, CT
Five pesticide recertification credits available.
The fee is $25.00 and to register contact Leanne Gundt at leanne.pundt@uconn.edu or call 860-626-6855.
Program Brochure:

Municipal Grounds and Sports Turf Academy
June 25 & 26, 2019, 8 am-3 pm
W.B. Young Building, 1376 Storrs Road, Room 100
University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT
Register:
https://www.cahnconference.uconn.edu/index.php?controller=event&task=options&eventId=47
Program information: http://ipm.uconn.edu/events-trf-acdmy-2019.php

**References:**
UMass Landscape Message, May 3, 2019
https://ag.umass.edu/landscape/landscape-message-may-3-2019

Boxwood Blight, The University of Maryland website
https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/boxwood-blight

The Morton Arboretum, Winter Injury to Trees and Shrubs

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