

ORNAMENTALS

• H O T L I N E •

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Issue 18

INSECTS

Brian Kunkel
Ornamental IPM Specialist

CATERPILLARS are found from spring through fall. Most of the time, these caterpillars do incidental feeding on a variety of plants, and become either bird food or emerge from a pupa as a moth or butterfly. However, during the summer there are a couple caterpillars that have painful stings--SADDLEBACK, PUSS, and the MONKEY SLUG caterpillars. Caution should be used while working with host plants of these caterpillars.

SADDLEBACK caterpillars feed between 1790 - 2503 GDD50 or begin about when *Lagerstroemia* flower buds break. This caterpillar is brown to black at the anterior and posterior ends while the mid-section is bright green. The mid-section looks like a saddle because of the white outlines of around the green. Fleshy tubercles covered with urticating spines result in a sting that may cause a burning sensation. Some people have intense reactions requiring medical attention. Hosts include: apples, asters, elms, dogwoods, linden, maple, oak, sunflowers, viburnum, *Prunus*, and corn among others.

PUSS caterpillars have many tan to dark brown or gray hairs. Stout spines connected to poison glands are underneath the hairs of this stout, convex-shaped caterpillar. It feeds in the middle of the summer; however, little is known of activity cycle because it is not of any economic concern. Some people experience burning sensations when stung; however, many state the sting is worse. Some people experience severe reactions and need medical attention when stung. Hosts include oak, hollies, hackberry, roses, apple, and other trees and shrubs.

MONKEY SLUG caterpillars are not as common as the other two. This insect has light to dark brown hairs with up to nine pairs of lateral processes that contain the stinging hairs. Reactions to exposure to this caterpillar are more similar to the saddleback caterpillar. Hosts include: ashes, birches, dogwoods, hickories, oaks and willows among other woody ornamental plants.

(Continued)

DISEASES

Nancy Gregory
Plant Diagnostician

MORNING MUSHROOM fruiting bodies were noticeable everywhere on my Saturday morning walk last weekend! These small mushrooms (cone shaped, pale tan cap with a long hollow stalk) are probably *Conocybe* species, but may be *Gastrocybe*, a closely related species that is a little bit darker and a bit slimier. They are sometimes called conecaps or "cone heads". These are fascinating mushrooms, usually found in healthy lawns that have not been treated with pesticides, and under wet, humid conditions, in the

(Continued)

What's Hot!

Cedar quince rust (*Gymnosporangium clavipes*) is obvious on fruits of hawthorn, pear and serviceberry now. The bright orange aecial stage looks like tubes erupting from the infected fruit. Prune and discard affected material to help manage.

It is time to register for the 2016 Summer Turf and Nursery Expo at Ud's Carvel Research and Education Center in Georgetown, DE. The meeting is on Tuesday, August 16 from 8:15 - 3:30. Sessions include plant choices, proper pruning, turf weed ID, disease walk, LED lighting, bees and pollinators and of course the ever popular, Udairy ice cream. To register online go to <http://2016dnlasummerexpo.eventbrite.com>. With questions, call Val Budischak at 888-448-1203.



Gymnosporangium on fruit of callery pear. Photo credit: N. Gregory

For more information

on pests & practices covered in this newsletter, call your County Extension Office

Helpful numbers to know:



Garden Line (for home gardeners only)	831-8862
New Castle County Extension	831-2506
Kent County Extension	730-4000
Sussex County Extension	856-7303

View more pictures at <http://sites.udel.edu/ornamentals/>

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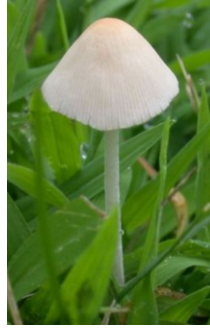
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Diseases (Continued)

summer months between June and September in the Eastern U.S. The immature button of this mushroom emerges from lawns at dusk. Overnight, the mushroom expands its cone shaped cap, spores mature about mid-morning, and by late morning the mushroom has dried up and almost vanished. The mushrooms are almost 95% water, the stipes or stalks are fragile and hollow, and cannot bear the weight of the mushroom, so they topple over or break apart. Spores are found along the gills underneath the cap, but these spores are not forcibly discharged, so they depend on the mushroom breaking down or being eaten for their dispersal. The very common *Conocybe* mushrooms are not a sign of fungal disease on lawns, but they are saprobes on organic matter in the thatch (mowed grass blades). Regardless of whether these mushrooms contain any toxins, it is advisable never to eat any mushrooms found growing in lawns or any other site unless you have them positively identified as edible by an expert, in person, not according to a picture.



Conocybe mushroom. Photo credit: Tom Volk

Insects (Continued)

Natural enemies such as wasps, birds, and parasitoids help keep populations low. Physical removal is one control method, and chemical control is rarely needed; however, chemical choices include *Bacillus thuringiensis* (better efficacy versus small caterpillars), spinosad, chlorantraniliprole, or pyrethroids.

Editor: Susan Barton
Extension Horticulturist

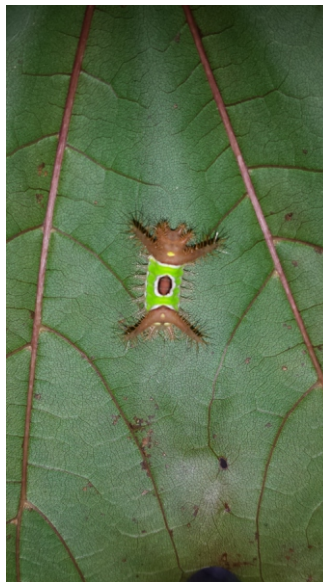
**GROWING
DEGREE DAYS**

AS OF June 19, 2016

● Swarthmore College
(Delaware County, PA) = NA ('15 = 1875)

● Fischer Greenhouse
(New Castle County) = 1719 ('15 = 1891)

● Research & Educ. Center, Georgetown
(Sussex County) = 1805 ('15 = 1981)



Saddleback caterpillar. Photo credit: B. Kunkel



Monkey slug caterpillar. Photo credit: B. Kunkel



Puss caterpillar. Photo credit: Lacy L. Hyche, Auburn University, Bugwood.org