Cooperative Extension

# ORNAMENTALS

• H O T L I N E •

April 15, 2016

Issue 4

## INSECTS

Brian Kunkel
Ornamental IPM Specialist

APHIDS are among the earliest insects of the spring, with small populations occuring on a variety of perennials. Aphids can have a complicated life history and feed on a variety of different plants. A few hosts include: beech, yarrow, Japanese anemone, coneflowers, bee balm, Salvia, lamb's-ears, violets, tulip popular, daylilies and many others.

Identification of aphids can be fairly simple. They are tear-drop shaped with two cornicles and a cauda. The cornicles, used to expel an alarm pheromone, are paired, long cylindrical chambers on the dorsal surface of the aphid's abdomen. The cauda is a tail-like process, used to flick honeydew away, that extends out from the abdomen and is found between the cornicles. Aphid populations are able to quickly increase partly because they reproduce by parthenogenesis (asexual reproduction). Two common aphid species found in our area are green melon and green peach aphids. Feeding may cause cupping, discolored leaves, or distortion of foliage in addition to honeydew and sooty mold. Some aphid species have a waxy covering. White shed skins may be found stuck to honeydew and can serve as an indicator of aphids.

Common green melon aphid colors may include: dark green (almost black), pale yellow, tan, green, or lavender. The adult cornicles are black. Common green peach aphid colors may include: light to dark green or pinkish to orange. Cornicle color is usually lighter than the color of the aphid's body.

Lady beetles, green lacewings, hover fly larvae and various parasitoids are voracious predators or parasitoids of aphid populations. If control is warranted, a number of products are available for use. Some non-neonicotinoid options include: insecticidal soap, horticultural oil, Beauveria bassiana, abamectin, azadirachtin, pymetrozine, pyriproxyfen, pyrethroids, carbaryl or acephate. Neonicotinoids such as imidacloprid, acetamiprid, clothianidin and dinotefuran are other options.

## DISEASES

Nancy Gregory
Plant Diagnostician

VOLES AND OTHER SMALL ANIMALS THAT DAMAGE PLANTS are often active in the late winter, bark stripping and feeding on small branches near the ground. Voles are also called meadow mice but will not usually enter homes or climb like mice. In Delaware, we have pine voles and meadow voles, dark colored rodents with a compact body, short legs, coarse fur, short tail, small eyes, and partially hidden ears. When fully grown, a vole can measure 3 to 5

(Continued)

## What's Hot!

Trim back forsythia with galls or stem blight following flowering.

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Doug Tallamy is looking for buck moth larvae. They are frequently found feeding on oaks or crawling around ground underneath oaks as they search for a place to pupate. Their populations should be active around June (so a head's up). They will feed gregariously as caterpillars also. Contact Brian (bakunkel@udel.edu) if you find any.

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Look for an announcement about a lecture from the Burle Marx Landscape Design Studio landscape architects who are visiting the US from Rio de Janeiro and will be speaking at UD on May 5 from 7-9 PM. If you receive Hotline as a hard copy and are interested in the talk, shoot me an email (sbarton@udel.edu) and I will send you the flyer.

Aphids on flower bud.
Photo credit: Mohammed El Damir, Bugwood.org

**For more information**

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

Helpful numbers to know:

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|---|---|
| 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/

Diseases (Continued)

inches for the body with another 2 for the tail. Moles are similar, but have a snout that extends outward, live underground, and eat insects. Voles spend most but not all of their time in their burrow systems, well-traveled runways that connect burrow openings. A protective layer of grass or other ground cover usually hides the runways. The multiple burrow openings are each about 2 inches in diameter, found by pulling back overhanging ground cover. Fresh clippings of grass or plant material and droppings are observed near the burrows. Voles are active day and night, year-round, and populations can increase rapidly, with litters of 3-6 young. Voles are mostly herbivorous, feeding on a variety of grasses, herbaceous plants, bulbs, and tubers and they store seeds and other material in the underground burrows. Voles eat bark and roots of trees and shrubs, usually in the winter and early spring. The best way to manage vole populations and deter damage is to make habitats less inviting. Remove or trim back ground covers such as periwinkle and do not place mulch too close to the base of trees and shrubs. Mow or trim lawn turf areas around trees and shrubs. Voles can be trapped, but toxic bait or poison is not recommended in areas where there are pets or children. Predators such as cats, foxes, hawks and owls will help keep vole populations low.

Editor: Susan Barton
Extension Horticulturist

Burrows and openings of meadow voles. Photo credit: R. Bowman, University of DE.

## GROWING DEGREE DAYS

AS OF April 12, 2016

- Swarthmore College (Delaware County, PA) = 152 ('15 = 81)
- Fischer Greenhouse (New Castle County) = 123 ('15 = 37)
- Research & Educ. Center, Georgetown (Sussex County) = 165 ('15 = 71)