Cooperative Extension

ORNAMENTALS

• H O T L I N E •

September 6, 2019 Issue 24

INSECTS

Brian Kunkel
Ornamental IPM Specialist

WHITE GRUBS may be found feeding on grass roots or in flower beds now so this is a good time to scout. Many scarabs in our area contribute to the white grub complex found feeding on turfgrass roots or among roots of woody plants. Scout areas with records of previous grub populations for feeding grubs first, and make applications as necessary. Scarabs that contribute to the white grub complex include: Japanese beetles, masked chafers, green June Beetles, oriental beetles, and *Phyllophaga* spp. Earlier in the year we had plenty of rainfall for white grub development and now that it is drier, the signs of grub feeding become evident.

Damage starts about mid-August to early September but varies depending on yearly conditions. Areas of turf with high grub populations may appear greasy or drought-stricken from insects feeding on the grass roots. Investigate lawns that feel spongy underfoot for white grubs. Also scout sunny locations, irrigated turf appearing drought-stressed, turf with grub history, and locations with high adult activity. Use a knife, shovel, or standard golf cup-cutter to sample a square foot of turf. White grubs are found at the soil-thatch interface and 8 – 10 grubs or more per square foot warrant treatment now to reduce grub damage.

White grubs are attacked by predators, parasitoids, entomopathogenic nematodes, and other entomopathogens throughout the year. Traditional rescue products include products such as Sevin or one of the many pyrethroids. Imidacloprid and other neonicotinoids are also frequently used as a curative product with some success if applied before mid-September. Applying a preventative insecticide such as imidacloprid to areas with historical grub problems during the middle of June until mid-July is another strategy to manage populations. Chlorantraniliprole is a relatively new product that may be applied as early as May. These preventative treatments target scarab larvae when they are smallest and easiest to control.

DISEASES

Nancy Gregory
Plant Diagnostician

SOUTHERN BLIGHT is a root and crown rot caused by the fungus *Sclerotium rolfsii*, and symptoms include wilt and dieback. Favored by warm weather, southern blight can wreak havoc in perennial beds in late summer. The serious problem is the wide host range of the fungus and the fact that it produces sclerotia, which are small, round, resistant structures, tan in color, capable of survival in soil and debris for years. Sclerotia are resistant to UV light and changes in temperature and moisture. *S. rolfsii* is usually spread by movement of plants. Remove affected plants

(Continued)

What's Hot!

Bacterial spot is showing up on tomato and pepper fruit, following infections in leaves earlier in the season.

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Seeing lots of oleander aphids on milkweed pods and leaves.

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Caterpillars are still active but require no treatment now.

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Scoliid wasps are still active in some places and are searching for white grub hosts - no treatments needed for the wasps.

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We have only two more issues of Ornamentals Hotline for the season, so we will take a break and have one issue in late September and one in mid October. Have a good fall!

White grubs. Photo credit: UGA Entomology, Bugwood

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://extension.udel.edu/ornamentals/

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Diseases (Continued)

and surrounding soil and discard in the trash, do not compost. Management includes starting with clean plants and sanitation, although there may be some benefit to biological control products containing strains of *Trichoderma harzianum* and *Trichoderma virens* (available as Rootshield).

FUSARIUM WILT OF CHRYSANTHEMUM is a serious problem in planting beds, but usually starts in production nursery sites. Examine plants for wilting and yellowing of foliage when purchased and reject those that do not appear healthy. A true vascular wilt pathogen, *Fusarium oxysporum* survives in debris and soil, and can be carried in irrigation water or transferred when taking cuttings. Fungicides suppress *Fusarium* but will not cure existing infections. Mums are also affected by *Pythium* and Rhizoctonia stem and root rot. Removal of affected plants and strict sanitation will help to manage soil-borne diseases.

Editor: Susan Barton
Extension Horticulturist

Fusarium wilt of chrysanthemum. Photo credit: N. Gregory

Sclerotia of the southern blight fungus on stems of penstemon Photo credit: N. Gregory

GROWING DEGREE DAYS
AS OF September 3, 2019

- Swarthmore College (Delaware County, PA) = 3163 ('18 = NA)
- Fischer Greenhouse (New Castle County) = 3192 ('18 = NA)
- Research & Educ. Center, Georgetown (Sussex County) = 3395 ('18 = NA)