

ORNAMENTALS

• H O T L I N E •

September 11, 2020

INSECTS

Brian Kunkel
Ornamental IPM Specialist

EUROPEAN HORNETS are large wasps that resemble yellow jackets but are much larger and fly towards lights at night. The European hornet is about 35 mm (1.5 inches) long and is brown with yellow markings. Nests are likely to be found in protected areas such as tree cavities, bird houses, barns, or sheds (rarely in open areas). During summer, they feed on large insects such as caterpillars, grasshoppers, flies, and bees.

European hornets can damage ornamental trees and shrubs such as lilacs, rhododendrons, birch, ash, and dogwood. The hornet gains nourishment from the plant sap and the bark may be used as nesting material. Workers expand the nest throughout the summer, and in the fall the next season's queens mate with newly emerged male hornets. European hornets feed on substances high in carbohydrates in the fall. These food sources include overripe fruits, tree sap, soft drinks, juices, and honeydew produced by spotted lanternflies, aphids, or soft scales. This hornet is also known to attack small fruits such as grapes and consume the sugars. European hornets do not reuse nests and populations die off with the onset of cold weather.

We do not have Asian murder hornets in Delaware. This wasp is large and earlier in the summer people confused it with the Asian murder hornet. Another large wasp we do have in Delaware is the cicada killer--a solitary non-aggressive beneficial parasitoid of the annual cicada.

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DISEASES

Jill Pollok
Plant Diagnostician

MUSHROOMS IN THE LAWN have been a common sight the past few weeks. Don't be alarmed if you have them pop up; a healthy lawn is full of beneficial fungi, bacteria, nematodes, and other microorganisms that decompose organic matter in the soil. A mushroom is the aboveground reproductive structure of a fungus living in the soil, and the majority of the fungal structures are beneath the lawn or mulch surface. Most fungi are beneficial. These fungi feed on decaying lignin-based organic material such as wood, mulch, old roots, tree stumps, thatch, dead leaves, and twigs. Prolonged periods of wet, humid weather cause the underground fungal structures to form mushrooms, which disperse spores to create new fungi. Usually mushrooms will disappear when the weather becomes dry or gets cooler, only to emerge again when the weather is favorable; maybe not until next year. Removing mushrooms by hand or with a mower will

(continued)

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

Issue 24

What's Hot!

European hornets, bald-faced hornets, yellow jackets, bees and other stinging insects are feeding on honeydew produced by adult spotted lanternfly (SLF) feeding. Be careful around plants with SLF populations to reduce chances of being stung.

A limited space, green industry professional only workshop Establishing and Monitoring Trees in Challenging Conditions: A Closer Look at Emerald Ash Borer is on September 17 from 4-5:30 PM. Meet at Townsend Hall parking lot. Preregistration is required <https://www.pcsreg.com/emerald-ash-borer>

There are two more issues of Hotline for 2020. We will wait until the end of September for the next issue (9/25) and then have a wrap-up-the-season issue in mid to late October.



European hornet and damage. Photo credit: B. Kunkel

For more information

on pests and 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 photos at <http://extension.udel.edu/ornamentals/>

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Diseases (continued)

not eliminate the fungi from the soil, but can reduce the number of spores and the number of new mushrooms emerging in the yard.

Mushrooms growing at the base of tree trunks, or conks on the trunk, are not as innocuous as lawn mushrooms. These are usually a sign of a root rot or trunk disease. Since these fungi break down decaying lignin-based plant material, they are usually a sign that the trunk/roots are dead or decaying.

Editor: Susan Barton
Extension Horticulturist

Insects (continued)

The only effective method of control is nest removal. Use a pressurized wasp and hornet spray with a range of 10 - 15 feet. Make treatments at dusk or after dark to ensure most of the hornets are in the nest. Use caution when treating hornet nests since hornets guard the nest, can sting repeatedly, and can fly at night. Protection of trees is often obtained by applying pyrethroids (e.g., bifenthrin, lambda-cyhalothrin, etc...) to the branches; however, the residues do not persist very long so multiple applications may be needed.



Inky cap mushrooms in lawn. Photo credit: J.J. Larsen, Bugwood.org



**GROWING
DEGREE DAYS**
AS OF September 8, 2020

- Swarthmore College (Delaware County, PA) 3122 ('19 = NA)
- Fischer Greenhouse (New Castle County, DE = 3035 ('19 =NA)
- Research & Education Center - Gorgetown (Sussex County, DE) = 3236 ('19 =NA)