

Pest Update (April 10, 2013)

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Note: samples containing living tissue may only be accepted from South Dakota. Please do not send samples of dying plants or insects from other states. If you live outside of South Dakota and have a question, instead please send a digital picture of the pest or problem. **Walnut samples may not be sent from any location – please provide a picture!**

Available on the net at:

<http://sdda.sd.gov/Forestry/Educational-Information/PestAlert-Archives.aspx>

Any treatment recommendations, including those identifying specific pesticides, are for the convenience of the reader. Pesticides mentioned in this publication are generally those that are most commonly available to the public in South Dakota and the inclusion of a product shall not be taken as an endorsement or the exclusion a criticism regarding effectiveness. Please read and follow all label instructions and the label is the final authority for a product's use on a particular pest or plant. Products requiring a commercial pesticide license are occasionally mentioned if there are limited options available. These products will be identified as such but it is the reader's responsibility to determine if they can legally apply any product identified in this publication.

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Timely Topics – back to winter for this week!

What to do about the ice?



What to do about the ice-damaged trees? The recent ice storm has left broken trees in its wake along with downed power lines. The damage appears to be most severe in the southeastern of the state with communities such as Sioux Falls having hundreds of trees with broken branches and trunks. What can a homeowner do to care for their damaged trees? Here are a few tips.

Many young trees have been bent under the weight of ice. A common reaction is to go out and try to knock off the ice. Don't do this! Striking the branches may result in branch breakage and further damage to the tree. Generally it is best to let the ice to melt and allow the tree to slowly resume

its natural shape. Many times young trees will recover their natural shape and resume normal growth this spring. Most young trees including evergreens have very flexible stems and can easily recover from the bending.

The bending of the branches and trunk is a stress, however, even if the tree does return to its natural shape during the spring. The bending may result in internal damage and we often see these same trees attacked the next growing season by opportunistic insects, such as borers, that are able to exploit the weakened trees. Trees that are susceptible to borers, such as ash (clearwing ash borer), birch (bronze birch borer), and oak (two-lined chestnut borer), that were damaged during the ice storm may need to be protected from



borer attack this spring and summer. Pesticides that are either sprayed on the bark to kill the adult insects that are laying eggs or injected into the tree to kill the larvae after they hatch may be a valuable means of reducing the potential threat of infestation during the coming growing season.

Broken branches on tree should be cleanly pruned back to collar of the larger branch or trunk to which they are attached. Pruning to this collar will allow the tree to

protect itself from decay fungus that can infect an improper pruning wound. A proper pruning cut begins at the branch bark ridge – the upwelling of tissue seen at the junction of a branch and trunk, the “mustache” – and then follows a slight angle outward along the collar, the raised area of wood attached to the trunk. Do not top trees – leaving large stubs – as these will easily become decayed and also produce an abundance of weakly attached sprouts during the coming growing season. It is always best to make the proper cut, one back to the attached larger branch or trunk, rather than leaving a stub. Making the proper cut is the best means of protecting the tree from decay, tree paints or wound dressings do not protect against decay and can even increase the possibility of decay by keeping the interior too moist.

Is Honeycrisp a good apple for eastern South Dakota?

Yes this is a relatively recent introduction from Minnesota that has shown good hardiness across the central part of that state. Honeycrisp is a midseason apple (late Sept – early Oct) that is very crisp (hence the name), juicy, sub-acid (yet sweet) and has excellent storage life. The tree has low to moderate susceptibility to apple scab and moderate susceptibility to fireblight. It is not quick to bear, however, so you might wait 5 years or more before you see fruit on the tree.

Control of birch anthracnose, what to use rather than lime sulfur.

I had a question on the disappearance of lime sulfur from the shelves of garden centers and what would be a good substitute for lime sulfur. First, there has been voluntary discontinuation of this product and it has become harder to find. The most common substitute has been copper-containing products. Second, birch anthracnose is not a common disease and will be even rarer to find if this spring turns out to be a dry one. This disease, as with many anthracnose diseases, requires cool, moist spring weather to develop. My guess is that birch anthracnose this spring will be confused with velvet gall caused by a mite. The symptoms look somewhat similar and mite injury is more common during dry years. Fungicides containing chlorothalonil as the active ingredient can be used with the first application made at bud break and a second about 10-days later.

E-samples



More squirrel problems. I got an email about pine tips that appear to be pruned off cleanly at an angle and were now littering the ground beneath the tree. They wanted to know what could be causing this damage. The problem is



squirrels! They either chew off the tips of pine shoots or merely girdle them (see attached

photo). The ground in the spring can be littered with cut tips of ponderosa and Scotch pines from this feeding damage. If they do not bite the shoot off completely, they girdle it and the tip beyond the girdle turns brown. No control other than a 22.



I got a picture of a “silvery growth” around the twigs of an apple tree. The “growth” is not a gall, but the egg mass to the **tent caterpillar**. This insect is a common defoliator of mountainash, cherry, plums and crabapples. The female laid the eggs in late summer and the eggs hatch the following spring. Many years the eggs would be hatching by now but the cold spring is delaying this for another week or so. If you can spot the egg masses in your trees, now is a good time to

cut off the twig and attached mass and destroy them by crushing, burying, or burning. Do not just cut off the eggs and leave them on the ground beneath the tree. While the mice might eat them, they could still hatch and the larvae move into the tree. One other important note: sometimes you can find old egg masses, ones that hatched last spring. These egg masses will look gray and weathered with numerous tiny holes where the larvae emerged. The new egg masses will appear almost like molten glass around the twig with no holes from them.

Samples received

In the last week I received numerous calls from tree owners alarmed at the color of their evergreens, particularly arborvitae and spruce. Many callers mentioned that the trees looked fine a few weeks ago but are turning brown now. They want to know if there is a disease that needs to be sprayed. When I have stopped by to look at these trees the most common cause for the discoloration was winter-burn. Below are two samples, Potter and Perkins, and pictures that I received.

Davison County FL130001

What is wrong with my



spruce?

I could not find any insects, mites or pathogens associated with the sample so I had to drive down to see the tree. The trees, and there were a number of young evergreens on the site, generally showed some decline. A few had shed many of their needles while others were fine.

The problem appears to be site related with the most damage apparent where the soils were poorly drained. While last year was dry, the previous two years were wet and the combination of these two extremes resulted in decline of many spruce in the area.

Perkins County



Browning ponderosa pine

This is winter-burn rather than a disease. Winter-burn shows up as browning along the entire needle or brown tips and green base, usually lacks the banding and resin soaked spots that are associated with some diseases.

Potter County

are turning brown – is this winter-burn?



A large number of blue spruce

Yes, the discoloration is consistent with what is expected from winter-burn, a general browning of the foliage (though sometimes only the tips of the needles turn brown or only the new growth. I expect we will see more winter-burn as the trees come out of dormancy. The drought last year meant that many trees went into winter with a moisture deficiency and as the trees begin to transpire during these warmer windy days, but are not able to replace this moisture loss due to the cold, dry soils, the needles turn brown.