Pest Update (Oct 30-Nov 6, 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/conservation-forestry/tree-pest-alerts/

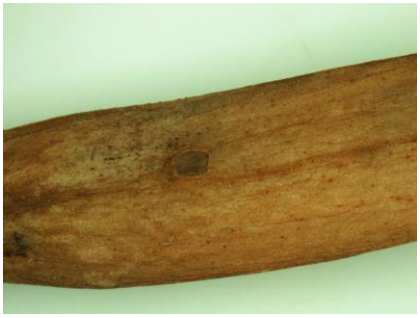
Any treatment recommendations, including those identifying specific pesticides, are for the convenience of the reader. Pesticides mentioned in this publication are generally those that are most commonly available to the public in South Dakota and the inclusion of a product shall not be taken as an endorsement 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.

Timely Topics

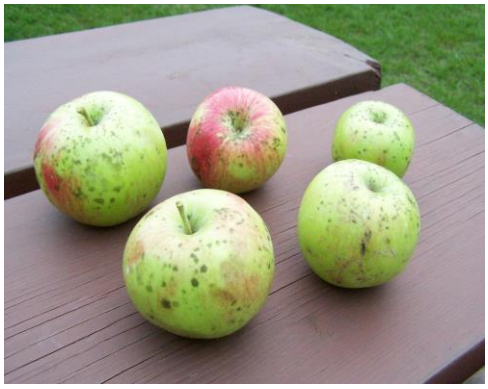
"It is raining worms from my ash tree"

I have had some calls and samples from people wondering about insects "raining" down from their ash trees or finding as they clean out their roof gutters

along with ash seeds. The small white legless larvae people are finding beneath their ash trees or in the gutters are the **ash seed weevils** (*Lignyodes bischoffi*). These are insects that spent their larval stage feeding inside of ash seeds during late summer. Usually you cannot find anything distinguishing about infested seeds. The only clue the seed was infested is a small hole where the larvae emerged. The larvae emerge from the seed in the fall while the seed is still hanging on the tree hence the "raining" of insects. Once the larva is on the ground it overwinters either in the soil or the litter layer. Pupation occurs in the spring and the adult weevil emerges in mid-summer with the females laying eggs on the newly-formed seeds. Once the larvae hatch they hollow out the seeds as they feed. There is one generation per year and no control is recommended or needed.



E-samples



I also usually receive some "what is wrong with my apple" calls at this time of harvest. This is the disease sooty blotch – great name, just makes you want to eat the fruit – a fungal disease (*Gloeodes pomigena*) that causes discoloration and blemishes on the fruit as it nears maturity. This is a disease that often occurs only on the interior or lower fruit as the cool, moist environment in the interior of the tree lends itself to the development of the fungus. The disease is more a problem with appearance than use and the blotches can often be removed with washing and rubbing and the fruit still used for eating and cooking. Any fungicide application would have been applied earlier, as the fruit was forming.

The picture was not the best but these are puffballs, the globular fruiting structure found on certain fungi. Puffballs are common found in the fall on moist humus or decaying tree stumps. When the puffballs dry (as they were by the time they reach my office as samples), they break easily and emits puffs of dust-size powdery spores. Some puffballs can become as large as 4 feet across while others are the

size of a golf ball. Many are edible but only when they are fresh, once the interiors begin to turn color they should not be eaten. Also never eat these or any other fungi until it has been identified to species - fuzzy picture is not enough.

Samples received

Harding County **This is "sick" spruce. What is the reason it is declining?**

This does not have any signs of an insect or a pathogen (disease) on the sample nor did the picture show any specific problem. The submitted sample has very short shoot growth for the past several years and since these are also mature trees, I suspect the real problem is the hot, dry summer we had back in 2012 and even the summer before. These two summers – and the dry, warm winter between – resulted in declining spruce across the state and particularly West River locations.

Perkins County **This is a declining Colorado spruce. The symptoms look worst along the lower trunk. Is this spruce needle rust?**

No, this tip discoloration is fairly common with drought-stressed tree. The shoot growth on the sample for the past several and the needle size is very small compared to the previous years and this matches up the drought time period discussed in the sample from Harding County.

Union County **Please identify these berries. Are they edible?**

These are fruits from a crabapple – look a lot like the Red Jewel crabapple. The fruit is edible on this cultivar, but not tasty. Even the birds leave it until midwinter which is not a good sign.