Pest Update (July 14, 2014)

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John Ball, Forest Health Specialist SD Department of Agriculture, Extension Forester SD Cooperative Extension

Email: john.ball@sdstate.edu
Phone: office 605-688-4737, cell 605-695-2503
Samples sent to: John Ball
Plant Science Department
rm 230, Agricultural Hall, Box 2207A
South Dakota State University
Brookings, SD 57007-0996

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/forest-health/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.

Plant development (Phenology) for the growing season

Plant development. The lindens are just finishing blooming in Brookings. This is a little behind normal, but not much. We have had many years where these trees do not bloom out till early July. Warm years, such as 2012, these trees have bloomed as early as the first week of June!

Timely Topics

I always receive questions about cottonwood shedding small branches and twigs about this time of year. A common reason for this abscission, a process called cladoptosis, is usually in response to changes in the environment, typically the weather changing from cool and moist to hot and dry. If you look closely at the base of these fallen branches you'll notice there is a well-defined abscission zone, rather than a shredded tear that would characterize a branch or twig broken off by strong winds. The phenomenon is most common on mature cottonwoods and poplars, though it can also occur on oaks. Usually the twigs start falling about the end of June and this can continue through September.

Another common cottonwood sample right now is cottonwood petiole galls. These rounded galls on the petiole, the leaf stalk, result in premature defoliation and are one of the reasons the cottonwoods are dropping their leaves right now. The **poplar gall aphids** that create these galls are leaving the galls now and migrating to their alternate hosts and will not return to cottonwoods until this fall. They are often more destructive on their alternate hosts, such as lettuce where they feed on the roots. There is no need for control at this time as the damage is done.

Another gall showing up now is the willow cone gall created by the **willow cone gall midge** (*Rhabdophaga strobiloides*). The adult midge lays an egg on the expanding terminal bud and the feeding by the soon hatch larva causes this growth to occur. The midge larva is inside the cone gall at this time and will form a pupa next spring and then the adult. There is no effective

control, nor does there need to be as the galls usually only result in some distorted branches.

E-samples

Almost every year, at about this time, I receive pictures of this shrub with two questions; 1) What is it? 2) Can I eat the berries? The shrub is Tartarian honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*) and the bright red berries line the branches at this time of year. The fruit is considered mildly poisonous to humans, particularly children and should not be eaten either fresh or as a jam/jelly. The birds do not seem to mind, however, and they eat the fruit and deposit the seeds along fence rows or other perch. The plant which was introduced as a tough windbreak and ornamental has become invasive across much of the east. The honeysuckle that produces edible fruit is called honeyberry (*Lonicera caerulea*) and this is also a tough plant, adapted to our soils and climate, but as the name implies – delicious fruit!

The disease, pear scab, is beginning to show symptoms. The disease caused by the pathogen *Venturia pyrina* is related to the similar disease that occurs on apples known as apple scab. Pear scab results in the infected leaves developing a blackened margin, sometimes covering most of the leaf. These leaves will hang for a short time then fall. There will also be lesions on the twigs and the fruit. The symptoms differ from fireblight in that the blackened leaves will still be moist to the touch while the leaves on blighted branches will often be curled, shriveled and dry.

I mentioned powdery mildew in last week's *Pest Update* and this week received a picture of **mildew on oak**. This is not the same fungi that causes mildew on lilacs; each woody plant genus has its own powdery mildew fungi, but the symptoms tend to be similar. The leaves will have white to gray powdery spots or felt-like mats. Infected leaves may turn yellow and begin falling in August. Powdery mildew fungi thrive in humid conditions, though not necessarily wet conditions. This year we have seen a lot of rain but the air has also been humid and the nights cool, both perfect conditions for the

disease to develop. There are fungicide treatments for managing powdery mildew, those with the active ingredient of chlorothalonil or sulfur being commonly available (Note: sulfur can be toxic if applied to some plants – read and follow label directions exactly!).

Samples received/site visits

Beadle County **What is on this chokecherry branch?**

This is the work of the uglynest caterpillar (*Archips cerasivorana*). A favorite host is cherry and it constructs one of the densest nests of all the spring web-forming caterpillars. The nest was filled with pupa cases; many now open as the adults are beginning to emerge to lay eggs. Most of the pesticides labeled for defoliating caterpillars will be effective on this insect and the treatment is best applied when the caterpillars are first spotted in the spring.

Gregory County **What is wrong with this oak and ash tree?**

The blisters on the oak are from an eriophyid mite similar to the one discussed on elm in last week's *Pest Update*. The curling leaves of the ash are due to feeding by the ash leaf curl aphid. Treatments are probably a little late for this year and nothing will remove the curls but if they are concerned about the problem appearing next year they could apply an insecticide containing imidacloprid as the active ingredient as a soil drench to kill the aphids as they begin to feed. The product needs to be applied in the spring just after the leaves come out, not when you first see the aphids.

Lake County **What is the tree and what is wrong with it?**

This is a bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) and the leaves are so distorted I can see what ID was difficult. The reason for the distorted leaves is most likely herbicide. The stretching or drawstring effect to the leaves is a typical symptom of a growth regulator herbicide such as 2,4-D.

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