Pest Update (August 7, 2019)

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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
Agronomy, Horticulture and Plant Science Department
rm 314, Berg 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.

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 products identified in this publication.

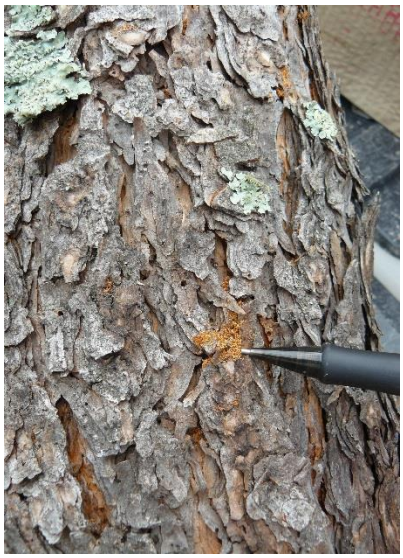
Plant development for the growing season

The Ural falsespireas are in full bloom and these are is probably one of our nicest late summer flowering shrubs. The species does sucker, and it can become 5 to 7 feet tall but the cultivar ‘Sem’ (in the picture) only reaches a height of 3 to 4 feet. This shrub performs well in our climate and is tolerate of alkaline soils. The only negative to Sem is, unlike the species, it does not seem to continue to bloom into autumn. Instead it flowers in August and then only an occasional bloom thereafter.

Timely Topics

Bark beetles in dying East River pines. I am surprised how many people still think the mountain pine beetle outbreak is still ongoing in the Black Hills. Fortunately, it ended in 2016 and now only small pockets of infested tree appear throughout the Black Hills. Now if I see a grouping of 20 tress killed by this beetle its unusual where 10 years ago groupings of several hundred infested trees was common.

Now the calls are from East River with landowners concerned their ponderosa pine belt is dying from this bark beetle. No, this is not the mountain pine beetle, but the six-spined engraver beetle known as *Ips calligraphus*. This engraver beetle is common in dying pines and can be found throughout the Great Plains as well as the pine forests in the northeastern part of the US and the western forests.



The beetles are referred to as one of the “shothole” borers, the name due to the fact the bark can appear that someone shot at the tree as it is covered with small holes that often have sawdust surrounding them. Once you pull the bark away you can find a network of tunnels that form ‘Y’ or ‘H’ patterns and you might even find the white legless larvae or an adult. (which is a large bark beetle and as the common name implies has 6 spines on the end of the wing covers).

At least in most of the trees that I have looked at the engraver beetle is the secondary stress and the trees are really declining more from old age (have looked at some ponderosa pine plantings that are 75

to 100 years old), drought, diploidia tip blight and a number of other stresses – in other words these trees were goners before the beetle. The beetles are just speeding up the dying process.

E-samples

Ash flower galls are appearing on the twigs of ash throughout the state. The brown to black "ball" hang in clusters beneath the branch shoots. The galls are due to the feeding activity of the ash flower gall mite and this mite only feeds on the male flowers of ash. Many of the black, green and white ash cultivars are "male-only" as most tree owners do not like to deal with cleaning up the small winged samaras that develop from the female flowers. However, many trees have both male and female flowers as you can see by the galls and the samaras in the picture. The galls may be objectionable and detract from the appearance, but do not harm the health of the tree.

This also has been the week for calls about Tatarian honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*), what is it and can you eat the fruit. The fruit is a red, orange or yellow fleshy berry, about 1/8-inch diameter, that typically occurs in pairs near the base of a leaf. The fruit is widely regarded as poisonous to humans, though there is not much documentation regarding this fact. Vomiting and abdominal pains are often given as the symptoms that following eating the fruit. European literature, and this honeysuckle comes from Europe, is where most of the information on toxicity comes from, but no sense tempting fate and I would suggest avoiding eating this fruit fresh or in jams or jellies. Interestingly, one paper from the United States points out a study where the fruit was found to be poisonous to rabbits.

The wooly oak gall is appearing on bur oaks across the state. The wooly oak gall is a fuzzy white to tan globose to elongated gall that forms on the underside of the leaves. It is caused by the feeding activity of *Callifhytus lanata*, a small cynipid wasp. The galls do not harm the tree and photosynthesis is not disrupted. The galls usually appear on a tree for several years then disappear for another eight or ten year before

the cycle begins again. There no effective treatments to prevent these galls.

Samples received/site visits

Jackson County **What is this insect?**

The insect is the eastern poplar buprestid (*Poecilonota cyanipes*). This insect can be found in cottonwoods and poplars throughout much of the state despite the name "eastern." This buprestid typically infests stems that are about ½-inch diameter, though it can attack trees and branches larger than 3-inches. The adults are out in mid-summer and can be controlled with a bark application of an insecticide containing permethrin. However, they usually infested dying or stressed trees so are finishing off the tree rather than being the true problem.

Jones County **What is killing this cotoneaster?**

A common question this year! The cotoneaster is infected with fireblight. The simplest way to manage the disease in this shrub is to prune the entire plant back to 2-inches tall during the winter months. Cotoneaster will quickly grow back the next spring and usually its disease free.

Minnehaha County **What is causing these ash trees to die?**

Parking lots are tough environments where trees are subjected to de-icing salts, limited soil moisture, compaction, heat and several other stresses. It is almost normal to find dying trees in these locations, particularly parking islands. The trees were also infested with the banded ash borer and this insect usually infested dead and dying wood. There is no magical cure for these trees – it is just a tough location. The best solution is placing mulch around the base of the trees – at least 3 feet out – to reduce mechanical injury, limit de-icing salt use and water during dry spells.

Walworth County **What is causing all these small holes in ash?**

The small, almost bb size, holes are the emergence holes to the ash bark beetle. This is a frequent insect inhabiting dying ash branches and trees. The beetles are rarely the reason the tree is declining but are merely attacking a tree that is already beginning to decline due to other stresses.

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