Currituck Garden News

NC State University A&T State University COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
Empowering People • Providing Solutions

May 2015

Will the real mealybug please stand up?

Did you know that lady beetles come in a wide variety of sizes and colors. Not all lady beetles are red with black spots. Beetles over winter at the base of trees and in leaf litter. They emerge from hibernation in early spring and lay eggs on stems and leaves close to a food source. Adults and larvae feed primarily on aphids, mealybugs, scale and other soft-bodied insects. Adults also feed on nectar and pollen. Lady beetle larvae are usually alligator-shaped and are commonly dark bluish with red or yellow markings. Some lady beetles however are covered with long, white strands of wax. These fuzzy, white larvae are sometimes confused with mealybugs. If you find insects that look like this in your landscape, don't assume they are bad and reach for pesticides because lady beetles are very important predators that contribute to the natural control of scale insects.

Aphids, mealybugs and scale insects suck sap from leaves and stems, excrete honeydew and cause trees and shrubs to become covered with black sooty mold. A mealybug can lay 200 to 600 eggs and each scale can lay thousands of eggs. Without natural predators to control scale insects, trees can quickly become heavily infested. A single lady beetle larvae may consume up to 3000 scale insects to complete development.

Mealybugs and scale insects can be hard to control with pesticides because of their waxy coatings. Pesticides used to treat scales and other insect pests can kill lady beetles as well. Our desire to live in a bug free world can often lead to the creation of an environment where insect pest populations explode. Protecting natural enemies can be critical to reducing urban scale outbreaks.

Lady Beetle Larvae
Photo credit: Patrick Porter, Texas A&M

Lady Beetle Larvae

Photos courtesy of

Top Left:
entomb.okatate.edu
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bugguide.net
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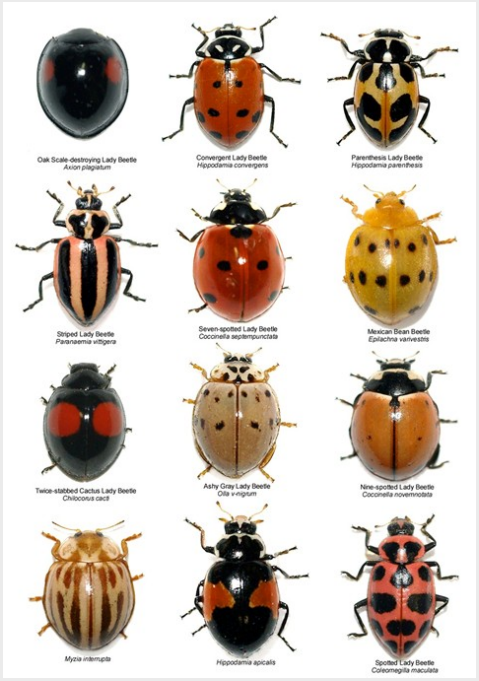
myrmecos.net



Please Share This Newsletter

The Garden News is published to provide you with educational information, upcoming programs and opportunities on gardening issues. Feel free to share with others.

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Tomato Leaf Spots

If your tomato plants are speckled with spots you may have a case of Septoria Leaf Spot. The infection usually occurs on the lower leaves near the ground, after plants begin to set fruit. Numerous small, circular spots with dark borders surrounding a beige-colored center appear on the older leaves. Tiny black specks, which are spore-producing bodies, can be seen in the center of the spots. Severely spotted leaves turn yellow, die and fall off the plant. The fungus is most active when temperatures range from 68 to 77° F, the humidity is high, and rainfall or over-head irrigation keeps the leaf surface wet. Defoliation weakens the plant, reduces the size and quality of the fruit, and exposes the fruit to sunscald. The fungus is not soil-borne, but can overwinter on crop residue from the year before or infected vegetation left lying around. Crop rotation of 3 years and sanitation (removal of crop debris) will reduce the amount of inoculum present. Do not use over-head irrigation. Repeated fungicide applications with chlorothalonil, copper fungicide or mancozeb will keep the disease in check. For a list of fungicide products labeled for home garden use and a list of tomato varieties that are resistant to various diseases go to: http://go.ncsu.edu/tomato_diseases

Beware and Be Prepared

Squash Vine Borers over winter as larvae in the soil and emerge in May as adults. During May and June the adults lay eggs on squash stems near the base of the plant. The eggs hatch in 7 - 9 days and bore into the stems where they will feed for 4 to 6 weeks causing the squash plants to quickly wilt and die. The larvae will then leave the plant and return to the soil and emerge again as an adult in August. Once the borer enters the squash stem, treating with insecticides is a waste of time. Insecticides must be applied just before the eggs hatch from mid May to late June. Only the stems close to the ground need to be treated. Spraying the leaves will not provide protection. Stems will need to be treated at regular intervals according to the product label. Insecticides containing Neem oil, spinosad, pyrethrin, permethrin, bifenthrin or carbaryl can be used. Inspect your plant stems for holes and frass which looks like wet sawdust. If they are present, the larvae have already entered the stem. If you catch it early, the borers can be removed by hand and the damaged area should be covered with moist soil. If you are looking for a non-pesticide solution, try wrapping the stems with aluminum foil or fabric.

For more information about squash vine borers go to: http://go.ncsu.edu/squash_vine_borer

Photos courtesy of extension.umn.edu

Vegetable Garden

Most gardeners have already put tomato, cucumber and squash plants in the ground, but if you haven't planted yet, its not too late. Most vegetables can still be planted in May so give these a try:

- Snap and Lima Beans
- Cantaloupe
- Corn
- Cucumbers
- Egg Plant
- Okra
- Southern Peas
- Pepper Plants
- Squash
- Tomato Plants
- Melon

For a complete list of vegetables, planting and harvesting dates and recommended varieties see:

http://go.ncsu.edu/spring_vege_guide

Photo courtesy of extension.missouri.edu

Lawn Care

If thatch is thicker than 1/2 inch, power rake warm season lawns in late May after the lawn is completely greened up. Renovate warm season lawns starting in late May throughout the summer months using seed, sod or sprigs. Fertilizer applications should be timed to coincide with the plant's growth cycle. See the chart below for more

Fertilizer Applications
Bermuda: May, July, September
Centipede: May
St. Augustine: May, August
Tall Fescue: September, November, February
Zoysia: May, July

Turf grasses will not grow in very heavy shade or under dense leaf cover. If an area gets less than 50 percent open sunlight or less than 4 hours of sunlight per day, it is much too shady for turf grass to grow well. Using shade-tolerant cultivars is important when growing turf grass in partial shade. In general, warm-season grasses often suffer more winter injury in shaded areas than in open, sunny locations. St. Augustine grass is the most shade-tolerant of the warm-season grasses, followed closely by zoysia grass. Both Emerald and Meyer varieties of zoysia grass are more widely used in North Carolina because they tolerate cold better than St. Augustine grass. Centipede grass performs well under light pine-tree shade but is not as shade tolerant as St. Augustine grass and zoysia grass. Bermuda grass is the least shade tolerant of the turf grasses and should not be considered for use in shady areas.

All Bugs Good & Bad Webinar Series

Are you worried about diseases carried by ticks and mosquitoes? Do you want to know more about beneficial insects? Join us on the first Friday of every month at 2:00 pm for a webinar series called All Bugs Good and Bad. We will meet at NC Cooperative Extension, Currituck County Center 120 Community Way in Barco, NC. The webinars are free but seating is limited so please register by calling 252-232-2262.

For more information contact
Deborah Foster
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- **June 5** - Insect Born Diseases
- **July** - No Webinar
- **August** - Japanese Beetles

Photo courtesy of Phil Pellitteri
University of Wisconsin

Pruning

Photo courtesy of
extension.iastate.edu

Many of the spring blooming shrubs can be pruned now that they are done blooming. May is a good time to prune Flowering Almond, Azaleas, Barberry, Bayberry, Boxwood, Camellia, Daphne, Eleagnus, Euonymus, Forsythia, Harry Lauder's Walking Stick, Indian Hawthorn, Mahonia, Photinia, Pieris, Pittosporum, Ligustrum, Quince, spring blooming Spirea (Bridalwreath and Snowmound), Viburnum, Weigela, Witchhazel, and Yew.

As a general rule, shrubs that bloom before May should be pruned as soon as the flowers fade. Shrubs that bloom in May or later should be pruned before the new growth starts in the spring. For more information about pruning go to:

http://go.ncsu.edu/pruning_techniques

http://go.ncsu.edu/pruning

Currituck County Extension
http://currituck.ces.ncsu.edu/

For additional information on any of the contents of this newsletter call or email Debbie Foster at **252-232-2262**, deborah_foster@ncsu.edu

Deborah E. Foster

Mission, Vision and Goals

North Carolina Cooperative Extension partners with communities to deliver education and technology that enrich the lives, land and economy of North Carolina.

For accommodations for persons with disabilities, contact the Currituck County Center at 252-232-2262 no later than five business days prior to the event.

Coastal NC Daylily Society

The next meeting for the Coastal NC Daylily Society will be on June 16, 2015 at 10:00 am. They will meet at North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Currituck County Center in Barco, NC. Anyone may attend and new members are always welcome.

The Daylily Society members will be traveling to Sterrett Gardens in June. Sterrett Gardens is an official American Hemerocallis Display Garden on the Eastern Shore of VA. Become a member and join the fun today!

Follow The Daylily Society on Facebook

www.facebook.com/pages/Coastal-North-Carolina-Daylily-Society/

Follow the Currituck Master Gardeners on Facebook.

https://www.facebook.com/CurrituckMasterGardeners

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