

Wisconsin Horticulture Update Summary, September 11, 2015

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WI WEATHER REVIEW

This week began hot and wet, with multiple storms dousing the state and stalling fieldwork. Heavy rains caused flash flooding in parts of central Wisconsin; some reporters noted erosion damage to fields, roads and drainage structures. Sunny, cooler weather arrived by the weekend, with overnight lows falling into the 40s (Volume 15, No. 24 issued September 14, 2015, Wisconsin Crop Progress and Condition).

Average soil temperatures at 2" as of September 11, 2015: Hancock 64.2, Arlington 70.6 (http://agwx.soils.wisc.edu/uwex_agwx/awon/awon_seven_day)

Growing degree days (GDD)

Growing degree days is an accumulation of maximum and minimum temperature averages as related directly to plant and insect development. This week, the GDD_{mod50} in Wisconsin ranged from 1927 to 2811. Following is a list of DD as of September 20, 2015 for the following cities: Appleton-2382; Bayfield-1927; Beloit-2811; Big Flats-2523; Crandon-1970; Crivitz-2145; Cumberland-2253; Eau Claire-2528; Fond du Lac-2368; Green Bay-2266; Hancock-2523; Hartford-2335; Juneau-2470; LaCrosse-2797; Lone Rock-2700; Madison-2669; Medford-2083; Milwaukee-2293; Port Edward-2430; Racine-2294; Sullivan-2335; Waukesha-2335; Wausau-2178. To determine the GDD of any location in Wisconsin, use the degree day calculator at the UW Extension Ag Weather webpage:

http://agwx.soils.wisc.edu/uwex_agwx/thermal_models/many_degree_days_for_date

To put it in perspective, following is an abbreviated list of plant and insect phenological stages in relation to GDD accumulations at which events occur (<http://www.entomology.umn.edu/cues/Web/049DegreeDays.pdf>): Pine needle scale-2nd generation-hyaline stage (control target)-1500; Cooley spruce gall adelgid-2nd adults active (control target)-1500; Eastern spruce gall adelgid-2nd adults active (control target)-1500; Walnut caterpillar egg hatch, caterpillars-1600; Zimmerman pine moth-adult flight-1700; Arborvitae leafminer-3rd generation-1700; Banded ash clearwing borer-adult emergence-1800-2200; Fall webworm-tents become apparent-1850; Euonymus scale-egg hatch - 2nd generation-1900; Magnolia scale egg hatch-1925.

WI CROP PROGRESS AND CONDITION

Copy and paste the following link into your browser to find weather review and reports from around the state for the last week.

http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Wisconsin/Publications/Crop_Progress_&_Condition/2015/WI_09_14_15.pdf

INTRODUCTION

The host for today's WHU was Diana Alfuth from Pierce County; Insect Diagnostic Lab Director PJ Leisch was the specialist participant. In lieu of a guest speaker, a wrap-up and WHU evaluation discussion was held. Participants in today's discussions were representatives from the following counties: Brown (Vijai Pandian), Dane (Lisa Johnson), Eau Claire (Erin LaFaive), Milwaukee (Sharon Morrissey), Outagamie (Anne Donnellan), Racine (Patti Nagai), Rock County (Christy Marsden), St. Croix (Heidi Doering), Walworth (Chrissy Wen), Winnebago (Kimberly Miller).

HORTS' SHORTS

Prior to roll call, Diana and Heidi were commiserating about the rampant late blight and the fact that it is the first time they have seen it in their counties. Diana asked everyone to specifically mention what the status of late blight was in their counties. Agents report the following issues to be of interest this week:

Brown County: Most questions were about late blight, with two more confirmed cases last week. We had reports of cornfield ants flying around. There also were multiple confirmations of SWD in fall-bearing raspberries. Other issues were bees and wasps in the grapes and other ripe fruit, and plant ID and weed control.

Dane County: We have had no reports of late blight, but there has been a lot of basil downy mildew. We have also heard reports of milkweed seed bug.

Eau Claire County: There is not much different to report than what others have said. We are finally cooling down. We have had no reports of late blight.

Milwaukee County: We also have not had many reports of late blight, maybe one person. We had 3-4 inches of rain in the last couple of weeks so we have a lot of slugs. We have also had powdery mildew on cucurbits and peonies, but it isn't as bad on the lilacs this year. Apple scab isn't too bad this year. We had a confirmed case of basil downy mildew from the herb garden at Boerner Botanical Gardens. Japanese beetles are still active and it seems late in the season for that. We are also seeing milkweed bugs out the wazoo, but there haven't been too many yellowjackets. I expected them in our grapes since they were a little overripe. The grass is beautiful.

Outagamie County: We have been getting a lot of raspberry questions about rabbit damage, how to care for them and how to clean them up for the season. We have also had two reports of SWD. We haven't had confirmed late blight, but we did get a lot of questions about it because of the report from Green Bay. We had questions about hornets and yellowjackets and how to remove them. One interesting thing was a tree sample with a huge wooly scale infestation.

Pierce County: We have been getting rain every couple of days all summer, so we do have quite a bit of apple scab, in contrast to Milwaukee County. Late blight is everywhere and we have had confirmed cases but also cases that were diagnosed based on our knowledge of symptoms. This disease is new in this county. I have never seen it here before. SWD is in everyone's raspberries. We have also been pretty busy with questions about trees and weeds.

Racine County: We are about the same as Milwaukee County. We had a long dry period, but now we have been getting rain so everything is green and growing. We had many submitted samples for late blight, but no confirmation of the disease. Septoria has been very active this year on tomatoes. We have had lots of tomato questions: why there isn't as much fruit or why the tomatoes aren't ripening. It may be temperature related. We haven't had as many warm sunny days and warm nights for the fruit production and ripening. It has been a strange year for that kind of vegetable production. Things are slowing down for the PHAs, maybe because people are in the back-to-school mode and not paying as much attention to their gardens.

Rock County: I have been swamped with calls, which seems to happen every year when my MGs stop helping me. We had some weird tree questions, as well as a few about EAB. We did get a lot questions about ground bees (yellowjackets) and how to control them. Late blight is out there, but we haven't had reports about it. The biggest disease this year was Septoria on the tomatoes.

St. Croix County: We have had lots of moisture and the crabgrass is really seeding. We had a confirmed case of Raspberry Leaf Spot at a commercial grower and he will begin treating for that. Pythium and fusarium were confirmed on a pumpkin sample. There has been a lot of Septoria, but late blight is all over the county and next to us in Minnesota. I volunteered to answer questions at the Minnesota state fair and was hoarse from answering tomato questions for 4 hours. I still have Japanese beetles. I have lots of raspberries and lots of SWD. I put out both yeast and cider vinegar traps. The vinegar trap caught all the picnic beetles around and I caught hundreds of SWD in the yeast trap in just a day or two. I hope I am eliminating some of the egg-laying potential. We had a call about a bee eating raspberries. Does anyone know what it might be? I didn't know of a native bee that eats fruit. I am really waiting for frost!

Walworth County: Not too much else to report. We have had some reports of late blight and basil downy mildew. We had our county fair last week and had lots of questions in the horticulture building. There were many tomato questions since we had tomatoes sitting there. We also had questions about growing large pumpkins since we had an almost 200 lb pumpkin displayed. We had lots of rain recently so the grass is still growing and people are still mowing.

Winnebago County: We have no confirmed cases of late blight in the office, but the report mentioned by Outagamie County from Green Bay had everyone panicking. There were reports of people who went out and harvested their green fruit because their vines were dying, but the tomatoes which were brought in only had Septoria. We had a question about bat bugs and PJ has been helping me with that.

Diana commented that at this time in the season, frost is usually an issue especially for northern counties. This year's growing season is continuing.

SPECIALIST REPORT: Insect Diagnostic Lab Update

P. J. Liesch, Assistant Faculty Associate, UW-Madison Department of Entomology, and Manager of the UW-Extension Insect Diagnostic Lab pliesch@wisc.edu

Insect activity is slowing down. Issues this past week were:

- Japanese beetles weren't too active this year, but they really trail off in late August and early September. Chris Williams and I have found beetles in pheromone traps as late as early October so it isn't too unusual to see some at this time of year.
- The biggest issue this past week was about wasps, paper wasps, yellowjackets and bald-faced hornets either in the ground or in soffit areas. In response to Heidi's question, yellowjackets will go after any sugary food to feed their large colonies at this time of year. They go after softer fruit including raspberries that are compromised for any reason such as weather buffeting or SWD damage.
- We are still hearing about milkweed seed bugs which resemble box elder bogs, but have orange on them instead of red. <http://labs.russell.wisc.edu/insectid/2014/05/08/milkweed-bug/>
- Orb weaver spiders are visible in the garden now, including the Cross, Shamrock, and Marbled Orb Weaver. These are large bulbous spiders are good beneficial animals. Some large garden spiders are also orb weavers and can have bodies that are 1 inch, but reach up to 3 inches across with the legs included. <http://labs.russell.wisc.edu/insectid/2014/05/20/orb-weavers/>
- There are still a few reports of Magnolia scale, which was a major problem this year. Crawlers are out right now and the timing is right for control.
- Fall webworms are winding down right now. They build their silken tents in late summer at the tips of branches. Unless you are still seeing small caterpillars, there is probably no need to treat for them.
- Brownish beetles called foreign grain beetles are being reported. These beetles are attracted to the mold that grows on damp wood especially in new construction or renovations. Once the boards dry out when the heating season begins, the beetles die out. There is no need to spray, just vacuum them up.

Questions/Comments

Fly with a Green Iridescent Body

The flowers in our herb garden are full of flies with green iridescent bodies. Can you identify them?

These are likely blowflies. The larvae feed on dead animals, but the adults feed on nectar and can be pollinators. There are green and blue species.

Trapping Yellowjackets

Is it worthwhile to trap yellowjackets or will they be going away soon?

They will disappear with a few frosts. The problem with traps is that the yellowjackets become habituated to a food source and will completely ignore alternate bait in a trap. If they found available sugars in the raspberries, they may ignore the trap.

Foreign Grain Beetle Fact Sheet

Is there a fact sheet on foreign grain beetles?

Phil Pelliteri had a write up, but if you do an internet search for foreign grain beetle with Phil's name after it, there should be a fact sheet on our insect website. I can send you a link.

<http://labs.russell.wisc.edu/insectid/2014/05/21/foreign-grain-beetle/>

Magnolia Scale Honeydew Appeals to Dogs

I just wanted to share that a client called in to say that his dog would not stop licking a tree that was covered with magnolia scale. There were also wasps on it.

I suspect the dog found the honeydew to his liking.

SPECIALIST REPORT: Plant Diagnostic Disease Clinic

There was no PDDC update this week.

Questions

Brian was not present so there were none this week.

SPECIAL TOPIC: Season Wrap-up and Evaluation

In lieu of a special topic for the last WHU of the year, an evaluation was conducted to solicit feedback for improvement. Diana asked for input on several aspects of the weekly conference.

Timing

Is 9:30 am to 10:30 am a good time to hold WHU?

Two participants answered yes and there was no dissent from anyone.

Speaker Rating

Please rate the speakers on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 the best.

Comments:

- Rating 5-the speakers were great and I really appreciated the handouts and powerpointssso we could follow the presentation.
- I would give most of them a 5. Some of the speakers were very specific but the powerpoints added a lot to their presentations.
- I really appreciated the variety of topics. Almost all of the topics were ones for which I needed more information or had questions about.
- The topics were very good. I wasn't able to listen to all of them so I really appreciate having the podcasts available.

Future Topics

Does anyone have any ideas for topics next year?

Even though not strictly a horticultural topics, I would like to hear about volunteer management challenges as a professional development topic and to continue improving the way we do things.

Were There Any Dislikes?

Was there anything people didn't like?

The transcripts did not appear to be posted as quickly as in the past and that may have been due to differences in personnel and using MGs for the podcasts. I don't know where the status of the transcript lies and having staff do it. I use the transcripts frequently and miss them when they are late.

Do People Use the Podcasts and Transcripts

Does anyone have any other comments?

- I don't use the podcasts much, but I like the transcripts a lot.
- The podcasts are used by MGs and are very useful. I use the transcripts more myself.
- I appreciate being able to listen to the podcasts when I miss the WHU due to other commitments.
- Some MGs listen to the podcasts as a refresher and none of them have mentioned using the transcripts.

Other Comments

Does anyone have any other comments?

- A common complaint year after year is there is not enough involvement by other specialists. Thank goodness for Brian and PJ, who are our rocks. Other specialists would be welcome especially when there are timely issues, but how can we get them involved? Having them as speakers has been helpful.
- I really appreciate Brian's efforts on behalf of WHU and everything he does and I am a little concerned that he feels underappreciated. He puts so much effort into it and this conference wouldn't happen without his efforts, so I would like to thank him.
- We will have to give this some thought and decide as a team how everything is working. We may not be able to do everything that we have done, like the podcasts and transcripts. It is important that we know what is of value and how to make it happen. If something else pops into your head about the WHU, bring it to the team's attention. Bring your ideas to the October meeting.
- I would like to echo Sharon's thoughts on Brian's involvement with the update, the fact sheets and everything else he has done over the past 17 years. Is there a plan for next year when he won't be involved and who will be in charge of WHU?
- We don't have any answers for that yet. That will be a big agenda item. We will need to approach it as a team and brainstorm at the Hort Team meeting in October.

FINAL NOTES and ANNOUNCEMENTS

- This is the last WHU of the year. It has been great to connect with colleagues across the state every Friday and hear about what is going in their part of the state. Hopefully we will pick this up again in some form next year.
- Lisa Johnson from Dane County: On October 4-6, the Cut Flower Growers will hold a conference in Madison at the Sheraton Hotel. Roy Klehm, Brian, and PJ among others, will be on hand. There will also be a tour. You can find out about it at www.ascfg.org/
- Kimberly Miller from Winnebago County: As a reminder, our Invasive Species Workshops will begin mid-September at five locations around the state. Early bird deadlines are in early September.

The full audio podcast of today's and archived WHU conferences can be found at <http://fyi.uwex.edu/wihortupdate/>

UW LINKS

Wisconsin Horticulture webpage <http://hort.uwex.edu>

UW Plant Disease Diagnostics webpage <http://labs.russell.wisc.edu/pddc/>

UW Insect Diagnostic Lab <http://www.entomology.wisc.edu/diaglab/>

UW Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab <http://labs.russell.wisc.edu/tdl/>

UW Vegetable Pathology Webpage <http://www.plantpath.wisc.edu/wivegdis/>

UW Vegetable Entomology Webpage <http://www.entomology.wisc.edu/vegento/people/groves.html#>

UW-Extension Weed Science <https://fyi.uwex.edu/weedsci/>

UW-Extension Learning Store <http://learningstore.uwex.edu>

UW Garden Facts <http://labs.russell.wisc.edu/pddc/fact-sheet-listing/>

WHU "OFF THE AIR"

During this past week specialists have commented on these issues off the air: None

Vegetable Crop Update

Vegetable Crop Update Newsletter #30 is available at <http://www.plantpath.wisc.edu/wivegdis/>

Topics in issue #30 (September 05, 2015) include:

- Early blight and late blight forecasts
- Late blight updates for tomato and potato
- Downy mildew updates for cucurbits

Please continue to communicate new detections of late blight to me or your county agent. My lab (as well as the UWEX clinic) can offer free diagnostics and genotyping. This information is very useful in better understanding the epidemic for best management.

PDDC UPDATE

There was no PDDC summary for the week.