DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
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University of Arkansas System

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SPDN
Southern Plant Diagnostic Network

Issue 24-August 20, 2009

Arkansas Plant Health Clinic Newsletter

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Oak

Several species of moth larvae feed on oak leaves. *Bucculatrix ainsliella* is known as a skeletonizer because the larvae feed on the outer green fleshy tissues of oak leaves. This pest attacks red, white, and black oaks. Repeated infestations can weaken trees, causing defoliation and dieback. The adult moth is creamy white with brown markings. Larvae are yellowish green and often spin down to leaves from a silken thread. Cocoons are white, about 1/10 inch long, and ridged longitudinally. The pupae spend the winter in the cocoons on the undersides of leaves along the central veins and on the bark. There can be two or more generations a year. The most important control is raking the leaves up and burning them. This destroys the overwintering cocoons. The use of insecticides may be called for on valuable ornamentals. B.T. and safer soaps will kill the larvae.

Oak Skeletonizer-*Bucculatrix ainsliella*

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Oak Skeletonizer larva-*Bucculatrix ainsliella*

Photo by G. Keith Douce, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org

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Oak Skeletonizer cocoons-
Bucculatrix ainsliella

Photo by James Solomon, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

Maple

Maples such as Silver, Sugar, Red, Norway and Box elder are susceptible to a fungal leaf spot commonly known as Tar spot. The disease, caused by *Rhytisma* species, gets its name from the raised, shiny, black spots resembling drops of tar. The first symptoms show up in early summer as small, pale-yellow spots on the leaves. The spots enlarge and develop a black spot in the center as the season progresses. By mid –August the spots have become thickened and raised above the surface of the leaf. The spots may or may not have ripples or indentations depending on the species of *Rhytisma* and the species of maple. Tar spot causes premature defoliation. Spores are produced in the spring from the spots on last season's fallen leaves and are wind carried to newly emerging foliage. Control consists of raking all fallen leaves up in the fall and composting or burning them. Tar spot is not considered an economically important disease. It seldom seriously harms the trees.

Maple Tar Spot-*Rhytisma acerinum*

Photo by Keith Perkins, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Willow

Willow blight is a catch-all term used to describe common willow diseases that often occur singly or together on a tree. Rapid branch dieback, blackened stems, and blighting of shoots and leaves are symptoms of three diseases often found together on willow. The diseases are Black stem canker caused by *Glomerella miyabeana,* Willow scab caused by *Venturia saliciperda,* and Cercospora leaf spot caused by *Cercospora salicina*. Willow scab attacks current year leaves in the spring,

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rapidly killing them. Olive green velvety spore masses develop along the veins and in spots on the underside of leaves. Small shoots are killed when the fungus grows into the petioles. Black canker usually infects leaves and twigs later in the season than scab. The cankers most often appear at the nodes underlying petioles. Leaf blades that become infected turn black near the base. Leaves will shrivel and drop prematurely. Another common leaf disease of willows is Cercospora leaf spot. Lesions caused 0.5 - 5 mm in diameter and irregular in shape, with brown centers and purple margins. As the disease progresses and the lesions become more numerous, the leaves turn yellow and fall from the tree. In severe cases, dieback of the branches can occur. Control consists of pruning out diseased twigs, cleaning up fallen twigs and leaves, and avoiding overhead irrigation to prevent splashing spores to uninfected tissue. Avoiding stress by keeping willows properly watered is important in reducing the incidence and severity of these diseases. Daconil, and Captan have been used as chemical controls, but the large size of willows makes this impractical for most homeowners.

Willow Black Canker-*Glomerella miyabeana*

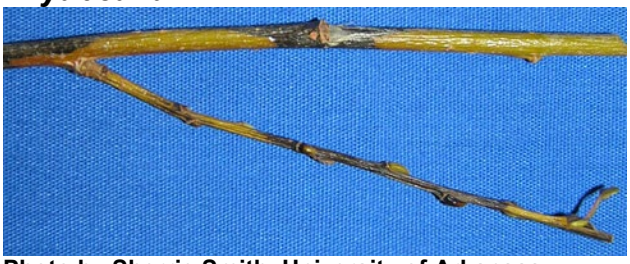

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Willow Cercospora Leaf Spot-*Cercospora salicina*

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Willow Scab-*Venturia saliciperda*

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

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Hosta

Foliar nematodes (*Aphelenchoides fragariae*) are microscopic roundworms which live, feed and reproduce inside the tender tissue of hosta. Symptoms begin as yellow discoloration that later develop into chocolate brown streaks, islands or wedges bordered by veins. The yellow and brown areas occur only between veins and the brown color can be seen on both the front and backside of the leaf. Eventually the entire leaf turns brown and dries up. The older leaves show the worse symptoms. Control is difficult as they can move from plant to plant via leaf moisture. Some recommendations include removing all hostas that show symptoms from the garden, as well as any nearby hostas up to a 6-foot radius. Avoid buying any plants with suspicious symptoms. You don't have to worry about treating the soil as this type of nematode spends its entire life in the plant. Be aware that sun damage can look very like foliar nematode damage. If symptoms occur review carefully the planting site in case the problem is too much sun and not foliar nematodes.

Hosta Foliar Nematode Damage- *Aphelenchoides fragariae*

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

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This bulletin from the Cooperative Extension Plant Health Clinic (Plant Disease Clinic) is an electronic update about diseases and other problems observed in our lab each month. Input from everybody interested in plants is welcome and appreciated.

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