



HORT SHORTS

Summer 2002



GYPSY MOTH UPDATE

OSU at Toledo Botanical Garden
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The Ohio State University,
The United States
Department of Agriculture,
and
Lucas County
Commissioners Cooperating

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Urban & Consumer
Horticulture Program
Funded by:

Cities of Maumee
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Lucas County

Amy Stone, Extension
Agent
Urban & Consumer
Horticulture

Populations are down. Educated and informed residents, the gypsy moth fungus, the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Gypsy Moth Suppression Program, and the hard work of Extension, has Lucas County looking good. "We have found caterpillars, adults, and are beginning to notice egg masses being laid, but numbers are down and populations are at tolerable levels," said John Nicholson, Gypsy Moth Technician with OSU Extension in Lucas County. "We are keeping a very close eye on the populations across the county. With the assistance of alert homeowners and monitoring programs we are hoping to succeed."

Not many people can forget those high populations causing total defoliation on many oaks and other species, frass falling from the tree's canopy, as if it were raining, and not being able to enjoy their patios, decks, pools, and gardens in June & July. "It is those high populations that we want to avoid", said Amy Stone, Consumer & Urban Horticulture Agent. Many residents across the county have been

very helpful in identifying gypsy moth activity. In areas where it was so heavily infested just a few year's ago, homeowners call immediately when they see a single caterpillar, or if they notice an egg mass. It is through this detection and the scouting of our staff and volunteers that we strive to keep the gypsy moth at manageable and tolerable levels for the residents.

If you have noticed any newly laid egg masses this month, please contact the office at 419-243-MOTH. Be part of the battle to control this insect pest!

A NEW PEST ALERT Emerald Ash Borer

In July of this year, Michigan and federal officials announced the discovery and identification, in five Southeast Michigan counties, of a new exotic pest from Asia - *Agilus planipennis* or the Emerald Ash Borer. The Emerald Ash Borer adult is dark metallic in color, 1/2 inch in length and 1/16 inch wide. Larvae are

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This publication is provided to assist you in receiving the horticultural information necessary to enhance the quality of life for you and your family. If you have any additions or deletions to our mailing list - please call Amy Stone or Barbara Northrup at 578-OSUE (6783) or visit our website at <http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~osutbg/>

All educational programs conducted by Ohio State University Extension are available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender, age, disability or Vietnam-era veteran status.

Keith L. Smith, Associate Vice President for Ag. Admin. and Director, OSU Extension. TDD No. 800-589-8292 (Ohio only) or 614-292-1868



SUN SAFETY TIPS FOR GARDENING

By Patrice Powers-Barker, OSU Extension Lucas County

The most common cause of skin cancer is sun exposure. Sun can damage the skin with repeated exposure. This damage cannot be repaired but there are some steps you can take to protect your skin from excess sun during gardening.

Take Cover!

Wear protective, tightly woven clothing such as a long-sleeved shirt and pants. If you can see light when holding fabric up to the light, sun can get in.

Block It with Sunscreen -

- ◆ Apply sunscreen/sunblock with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or higher
- ◆ Apply sunscreen at least 20 minutes before going out in the sun
- ◆ Do not forget the nose, entire neck, rims of ears and lips (Look for a lip balm that includes an SPF of at least 15)
- ◆ Apply Enough - It takes at least an ounce of sunscreen or block (size of a golf ball) to properly cover the average adult
- ◆ Reapply product liberally every 2 hours when outdoors, even on cloudy days. No matter what the label says: waterproof, water resistant, sweat-proof or all day protection, put on more sunscreen when it is windy, if you are in the water or working up a sweat.

Slap on a Hat -

Wear a sunsafe hat with a 3" wide brim to cover your face, neck, and ears.

Wrap on a pair of sunglasses—

Sunglasses will be labeled if they have UV blockers.



Know Your Moles -

Look for new moles or spots on your skin, and check old ones for any change in size, color, texture, shape, or sensation. Call your doctor if any of these warning signs appear.

CHECK OUT THIS WEBSITE



Have you heard? Ohio State University has recently unveiled the "Buckeye Sports Turf (BST) 10-Point Plan." BST is a tool to help schools, parks, recreational facilities, municipalities, colleges, and universities manage athletic fields for optimum performance and participant safety. The goal is to provide an ultimate plan. If the budget is restricted, the three maintenance priorities include: maximize root zone air; seeding and sodding; and supply turf nutrition.

Whether you are a parent spending time at the soccer field, or a professional maintaining the field, you can learn a lot on the BST website. Check it out at <http://hcs.osu.edu/sportsturf>



Horticulture Hotline

Graduates of our Master Gardener classes volunteer their time at our office at Toledo Botanical Garden. They are available to answer your horticulture questions. Call or stop in during the following hours:

Hotline Hours are 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
Local Phone 419-578-OSUE (6783)
Toll Free 1-800-358-HORT (4678)

BIRDSEED MAY MAKE YOUR PLANTS SICK



COLUMBUS, Ohio - What homeowners feed wild birds may not be very good for their plants and vegetable garden.

Ohio State University (OSU) plant pathologists have found that sunflower seeds, promoted as the top choice of wild bird feed, may harbor a fungal pathogen that causes Sclerotinia stem rot in a wide range of native plants, herbaceous perennials, annual bedding plants, vegetables, and woody ornamentals.

In a study, published in HortScience, the researchers analyzed 10 bags of various brands of commercial sunflower seeds purchased throughout Columbus, Ohio, and found that half of them contained resting structures of the fungus -all of which were 100 percent viable.

"Nearly 2 percent of the contents of one bag was Sclerotinia resting structures. That may not sound like a lot, but when you use up a bag of sunflower seeds every three weeks for a year and each bag contains 1.7 percent of fungal spores, you're introducing a lot of Sclerotinia in your garden," said Steve Nameth, an OSU plant pathologist and one of the researchers of the study. "If you don't have problems with this disease in your garden, then it's not an issue. But if you do have problems, then this could be a source."

Sclerotinia stem rot, also known as cottony rot because it produces a distinctive cottony structure at the base of the plant's stem, is a major disease of sunflowers. The fungal pathogen replaces the seeds of the sunflower with resting spores, which slip through processing cracks and are inadvertently bagged in commercial wild bird feed as sunflower seeds.

"Commercial birdseed production is not an elaborate process," said Nameth. "If it was, you wouldn't be able to drop a few bucks at the local department store for a bag." Lack of attention to detail in processing, however, may cost homeowners that picture perfect plant or vegetable garden.

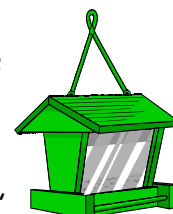
Sclerotinia stem rot has a host range of over 50 common ornamentals, a variety of vegetables including garden beans, lettuce, and cucurbits, and even field crops like soybeans, wheat and alfalfa. The disease, which causes the plant to wilt and eventually die, can be spread two ways: either direct contact with the plant stem or wind-borne spores which can then land on a host and infect it.

"That is why finding Sclerotinia in commercial birdseed is such a concern," said Nameth. "Those spores can sit dormant for five or six years and once they come into contact with a host, they germinate like seed, attack the plant and produce a rot."

Nameth said homeowners and garden lovers can take some precautionary measures against spreading the disease, including switching to a different birdseed brand if they are experiencing problems with the brand they are using, and practicing good sanitation.

"Keep the area around birdfeeders clean. Many people pick up the hulls of sunflower seeds and use them in mulch," said Nameth. "You really don't want to do that because all you're doing is inoculating the rest of your garden with the disease."

Nameth said to also keep a sharp eye on the feeding behavior of birds that visit the birdfeeder. "The resting spores may look similar and be the same size as sunflower seeds, but the birds won't eat them."



THE KENTUCKY COFFEE TREE, *Gymnocladus dioicus*

This is one of my favorites. The Kentucky Coffee Tree is known for its bold winter habit and handsome bark. It is a choice tree for parks, golf courses, and larger areas. Some municipalities are putting the tree to the test as they added it to their streetscapes, and it seems to be doing very well. The single downside may be its somewhat messy pods in the fall. The leaves are bipinnately compound and can be up to 36" long and 24" wide. It is one of the latest trees to leaf out, usually in early to mid May in Ohio. The new leaves have a pinkish to purplish tinge, and gradually turn to a darker green with a hint of blue. Don't eagerly await awesome fall color, at its best you might see some yellows shine before the leaves drop.

The Kentucky Coffee Tree can grow to 60 to 75 feet in height, and 40 to 50 feet wide. The National Champion Kentucky Coffeetree is 90 feet by 89 feet, and it is located in West Liberty, Kentucky.

Some cultivars you may want to seek out include: 'Espresso,' Prairie Titan™, 'Stately Manor,' or 'Variegata.' Dr. Michael Dirr states, "the seeds are great fun to throw and hit with a baseball bat. The seeds were used by the early settlers to Kentucky as a coffee substitute; hence, the tree's common name. It is reported that the leaves and seeds are poisonous to man and the seed and fruit contain the alkaloid cytisine. Cattle have been poisoned by drinking from pools of water into which seed pods have fallen. It is speculated that roasting the seed may destroy its toxic principal(s)."



MASTER GARDENER INFORMATIONAL MEETING



The Master Gardener Program is a volunteer program of Ohio State University Extension, and many other land grant universities across the country. In Lucas County, the educational portion of the program is offered in the winter, followed by the volunteer hours completed in the spring and summer

Each year, informational meetings are held for those interested in the program. This year's meetings are on Tuesday, November 12th at both 2:00 and 7:00 pm. In order to get an application form, attendance is required at one of the two sessions. Often, there are more candidates than spaces available in the class.

To learn more about this wonderful program, sign up for the informational meetings now. You can RSVP by calling the OSU Extension office at Toledo Botanical Garden at 419-578-6783.

A NEW PEST: Emerald Ash Borer

(Cont'd)

creamy white in color and are found under the bark. Their appearance typically goes undetected until the ash tree begins to show symptoms of being infested. Usually the upper third of the tree will thin, and then die back. This will continue until the entire tree is dead. The insects' exit holes are D-shaped, and resemble that of the bronze birch borer.

Although there are other reasons, including disease, drought, and poor soils, that may cause an ash tree to die, this insect pest is certainly something to watch for. Currently, this insect has not been found in Lucas County, or even in Ohio.

For additional information on this pest, check out the web at www.michigan.gov/mda and use the keyword "ash borer."