



BUDS and BUGS



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Huron County Master Gardener Newsletter



2003



MSU EXTENSION
HURON COUNTY

THE ORDEAL OF THE WHITE OAK AND OTHER SPECIES

By John Weis, Advanced Master Gardener

Winter this year did not pass easily and when it showed signs of abating, it was followed by very wet and cool weather that brought on an influx of many strains of fungal diseases, borne by wind and rain. The species hit most often were Norway, red and sugar maples. Silver maples were remarkably spared.

The influx of fungal spores was aided by the often dense foliage, (especially on Norway maples) which inhibited air flow through the leaves, preventing them from drying off quickly. Thus, density led to the persistence of moisture, the ally of fungal infestations.

The first sign of a fungal attack are the brown blotches that appear. Note: when the blotches spread outwards from a vein it is usually an indication of Anthracnose. Any number of sprays can be used on fungal diseases, among them a lime-sulfur spray or Captan. Bravo, which has systemic properties is

recommended also. However, for large trees, good fall sanitation practices are an important deterrent to the spread of fungal diseases in subsequent years.


But what of the mighty oak? As it turns out, white oak is especially susceptible to anthracnose. A few seasons may not do any permanent damage, but left unchecked can significantly contribute to the decline and eventual death of the oak. Of course, a fungal attack doesn't operate alone. Broken limbs left to their own devices will invite cankers to develop, causing the tree to respond by using up valuable sugar reserved to fight the attack. Thus, limbs

broken off invite fungal disease attacks. As the leaf surface is reduced, less and less sugar and complex carbohydrates are being produced...which weakens the root system. To overcome this, a tree will often put out side shoots, which appear as witches broom. All these side shoots produce leaves that

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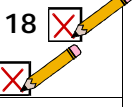
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TIMELY TIP

Now is the time to begin choosing those plants you want to overwinter indoors. Remove any dead or dying plant material and check closely for pests. *(See page 4 for ideas!)*



October 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6 	7 	8	9	10	11 
12	13 	14	15	16	17	18 
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Note— telephone numbers for these events are on page 6.



Schedule of Events in October

- 6 Pop Bottle Rose Show
- 7 Soil Mixing Workbee at MSUE sign
- 7 Master Gardener Informational Meeting
- 11 Planting Workbee at MSUE sign
- 13 MSUE Office Closed — Columbus Day
- 18 Planting Workbee (rain date) art MSUE sign
- 18 Saturday Morning Gardener — Fall Wreath Project

Please post the following up-coming dates on your calendar and share with others:

March 27, 2004 — MG Spring Into Gardening Conference

May 15, 2004 — MG Perennial Plant Sale

July 10, 2004 — MG Garden Walk (tentative)

SPRING-FLOWERING BULB SALE

The sale is generating interest. Thanks to everyone promoting it — don't stop now!

For your information: The crocus, hyacinth and allium are all sold out but there are still many varieties of tulips and narcissus left. The amaryllis are due to arrive the middle of October. Only a few of each of those were ordered, so if you don't want to miss out on these beauties, order now!

Remember: Orders are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. When they're gone, they're gone until next year.



WHO IS THIS MASTER GARDENER?



This Cinderella is ready for her pumpkin to turn into a carriage!

(First one to call into the office with the name of this MG wins 5 tulip bulbs from the MG sale!)



From Jim's Desk

*Dear
Huron County
Master
Gardeners,*

We've had quite a gardening season with some very interesting challenges! We had a great spring start up and a very arid mid-season summer time. The past couple of years have been unusually hard on our arboreal landscape, as well as most of our perennials. The last couple of autumn seasons have been very dry and the winters have had periods of extreme cold. Autumn, as you well know, is the time when most perennials are building root reserves for springtime fuel and increasing sap and sugar content to ward off the effects of the extreme cold. The thick sap acts as anti-freeze inside the stem tissues!

Because of these recent seasons, our plants have taken it on the chin and as I've said to many of you, "It's similar to you or me getting extremely rundown or low on sleep and being susceptible to other pathogens." This scenario accounts, in my opinion,

for many of the homeowner calls, as well as gardening challenges that we all seen this year. My many thanks for the diligence put forth by those of you who have done so well with our homeowner calls this year.

We've had great success developing the new ornamental garden in front of the Extension office. In spite of a meager budget, we will have a creation that we all can be proud of. The wall is built and will be filled with soil/compost/peat at a workbee before our next meeting. We'll then be ready to do some of the transplanting. I'm really looking forward to this splendid sight next summer when it's in its full glory.

I'll see you at the next meeting!

James E. Mantey

James Mantey
Extension Agricultural Agent
Master Gardener Advisor



LANDSCAPE UPDATE

The landscaping for the MSUE sign out front is progressing nicely. The Sheriff's work crew laid the cement wall. The raised bed now needs to be filled with a soil/peat/compost mix...and then planted

Volunteers will be needed to mix and haul the soil combination. We have the wheelbarrows! At another workbee we'll be planting.



Call Carol if you can be there on:

Tuesday, October 7

- soil mixing workbee
 - 6:00 p.m.

(before regular monthly meeting)

Saturday, October 11

- Planting workbee
 - 10:00 a.m.

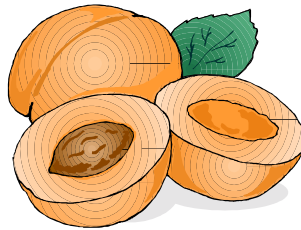
(RAIN DATE: Sat., Oct. 18)

TREAT PEACH LEAF CURL IN THE FALL

By Mark Longstroth, District Extension Horticultural and Marketing Agent

Peach leaf curl can be an important disease in Michigan. This disease of peach and nectarine can defoliate trees. Infections take place in the spring as the buds open. The fungus infects peach buds from bud swell to bud opening under wet conditions. Early spring fungicide applications effectively control this disease, but many growers have trouble getting treatments on before bud break. The prolonged cool, wet periods during bud burst that cause infection also limit growers' ability to spray in a timely fashion.

If you had problems with peach leaf curl this season, you can treat the disease in the fall. The best timing for application is during leaf fall in the fall. The longer you wait the better. You need good coverage of the buds exposed when the leaves fall off. This means that the best time to spray is after the



first frost. This is especially true with young trees, which hold on to their leaves until the really cold weather comes in late November. Young trees just coming into bearing often surprise growers when they have peach leaf curl in the spring. It takes several years for the disease to colonize new plantings and the disease organism lives harmlessly on the outside of the tree during the growing season.

By the time growers see that they have a problem, it is too late to do anything about it. Effective controls include Bravo, Ziram, Ferbam (Carbamate) and copper compounds. If you treat for peach leaf curl in the fall, that will be one less thing you need to remember in the busy spring season.

Call the MSUE office for specifics.

OVERWINTERING FAVORITE PLANTS

By Nancy Szerlag, Master Gardener and Metro Detroit free-lance writer

When I moved to the country and made my cottage my permanent home, I built a little English-style conservatory on the side of the house. So, last winter I had a great time experimenting with overwintering plants. Because I had the space, I brought in all kinds of containers. Most were combination pots of foliage and flowering plants, a mix of annuals, perennials and tender perennials.



Rather than tear apart a mixed container - if I liked the combination - I brought the entire pot indoors for the winter. If the collection contained a plant or two not recommended for overwintering, I ignored the rules and left the pot intact. I wanted to see just how long I could keep my indoor garden looking good.

When, and if, a minor player began to fade I simply cut it back - hard. More often than not, I was pleasantly surprised by annual plants that continued to grow and flower indoors for several weeks, and in some cases months. Some of those I cut back, such as a frisky petunia, sprouted new shoots and came back to life.

I have a pot containing a trailing verbena, New Guinea

impatiens and a tri-color coleus that will be spending its second winter in my conservatory. My little experiment in overwintering was sort of derailed when the big ice storm hit the first week in March. We lost power for several days and the temperature in the conservatory plummeted to the freezing mark. I managed to save half a dozen plants by bringing them into the main house where the temperature only dropped into the low 50's. A tiny space heater and good insulation made the difference.

However, that verbena, coleus and New Guinea impatiens combination was not among the chosen and the plants looked like they were toast. So, I dutifully cut them back and in spring moved the container outdoors for repotting. But when I checked the pot several weeks later, I was shocked to see green emerging from every plant. So I watered and fed it and moved it into the sun. It's still going strong. You may not have a conservatory to house your plants in winter, but a south-facing window will do. So if you have a container you can't bear to say goodbye to, invite it indoors for the winter and see if it's happy in its new home.

It's always fun to try something new!

(Continued from page 1) *WHITE OAK*

help to replenish the needed sugar, but in themselves are usually small and, consequently, insufficient to provide the exchange of sunlight and carbon dioxide needed to manufacture all of the food that's needed.

Recently, responding to a tree call, our party of three (a forestry expert from MSU, Jim Mantey and myself) visited a local golf course. It became clear that a number of elements were leading to the decline of the white oak on the course. Broken limbs still attached, brown leaf areas of anthracnose, witches broom and soil compaction were making it almost impossible for these trees to survive. Note: a stressed tree also sends out signals that attract destructive insects as well. Other trees such as white ash were also struggling, but the problem for them was more of a nitrogen depletion.



Well, what to do? The remedy would await the spring when remedial work could be done. This would involve boring holes in the soil about 2' deep and 1" wide around each tree in concentric circles from the inside to the drip line, some 2' apart. This could involve drilling up to 40 holes per tree, which in turn would be half filled with ammonium-sulfate. The other half would be water. The ammonium would be converted by microorganisms into nitrogen and the sulfate would help make the soil more acid, something oaks need. Now, imagine a golf course having some 50 trees. At the very least, about 1,000 holes need to be drilled. Not a job for any weekend warrior or the faint of heart!

Now, you say, "There must be another way!" Short of replacing all these oaks, this would be the best approach; and, the best way to control the fungal disease, is the use of Bravo with its systemic properties. The "other way" is to let the existing trees further decline, die and start to replace them with new white oaks or with red oaks, which are less susceptible to anthracnose. There is another option and that involves replacing the white oaks with a new hybrid species of silver and red maple bred to be fungal disease resistant. Another strategy would be to recognize the soil characteristics and begin replacing existing trees with improved varieties of white pine and northern cedar.

All of these are daunting tasks. Yet, once again, if the problems had been spotted earlier, yearly steps could have been taken so that the more severely damaged and stressed trees could have been treated first and then followed with a systematic regimen of remedial remedies for the less damaged. But now, the damage is almost too severe and, thereby more costly. Trees may await nature's design and give in to tree fall instead. I would suggest to the course owners or their board an intermediate remedy of dealing with the least stressed near public fairways and the frequently used and scenic places. Aesthetic considerations may now have to be taken into account first. Trees on the edges might be pruned or left to their own devices. Some plan to preserve and enhance the life of the trees surely must be done...and soon.

In a sense, this is part of any timber stand improvement (TSI) approach, whether in an extensive woodlot or on a scenic golf course. Hopefully, whether it's a valued tree on a home lawn, trees in a stand, or trees in clumps on a fairway, we have no doubt trees are a majestic, living contributor to our sense of who we are as cultivators of the earth and as good stewards of creation.

PLANT SALE REMINDER



Remember next May's MG Plant Sale. It's not too late to check your flower beds for those plants that need to be divided, trimmed and/or given away. After potting, bury them so they'll overwinter and be ready for next spring. Don't forget to label them!!!

CRABGRASS CONTROL

Crabgrass seems to have had a very profitable year and has become the only green plant in many areas of turf. At this point, we are past controlling it with herbicides. Crabgrass is a warm season species and will be gone with the first frost. By the time herbicide really gets after it we'll probably be pretty close to the first frost. So, sit back and watch TV, the crabgrass will be gone soon enough. (For next year, make note of where the heavy infestations are so you can get an early start on control.)



Calendar of Events

Call the numbers listed for times, fees and a more detailed description of the event.

Thumb Rose Society (989) 269-7154

Oct. 6 Pop Bottle Rose Show, Bad Axe Intermediate School Cafeteria, 7:00 p.m. *Come see the last rose show of the year. Bring your own if you like. Judging will be done by Erv Ignash. No charge!*

Bloomers Garden Club (989) 479-6347

Oct. 7 Tour to the Alpaca Farm, Ubly. Meet at Dorislee Doyle's home, 198 Ferris, Harbor Beach at 11:00 a.m.

Women's Farm & Garden (989) 479-9075

Oct. 8 Call Mary Falkenberg for details.



Michigan State University (517) 355-6469

Oct. 18 Fall Wreath Project, Saturday Morning Gardener, B109 Plant & Soil Sciences Building, 9-11:00 a.m., \$35 *Call now to get your reservation in. Classes fill quickly.*

MSU Extension, Bad Axe (989) 269-9949

Oct. 7 Soil Mixing Workbee at the MSUE office sign. 6:00 p.m. We will be mixing soil, peat and compost to fill the raised bed.

Oct. 7 Master Gardener Monthly Meeting, 7:00 p.m., MSUE Conference Room, 99 W. Soper Road, Suite B, Bad Axe

Oct. 11 Planting Workbee at the MSUE office sign. 10:00 a.m. *(RAIN DATE Oct. 18)*



Master Gardener Program
MSU Extension – Huron County
99 W. Soper Road, Suite B
Bad Axe, MI 48413-8272