

Currituck Garden News



June 2015

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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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Bagworms



Mature larvae completely enclosed in a protective bag.
Photo courtesy of Missouri Cooperative Extension

The Bagworm is a very common pest of conifers and other ornamental plants throughout the eastern United States. These pests overwinter as eggs within the mother's bag. Larvae emerge from the bag during May and June. The larvae crawl or drift via silk strands to nearby foliage where they begin to feed. Bagworms feed on plant foliage and heavy infestations can defoliate trees and shrubs.

Young caterpillars produce a silk bag on their posterior end that gradually collects plant debris. This creates a bag covered in pine needles or leaves that protects them from predators and looks like a pinecone. Since they don't move very much as larvae and the females don't fly, they can build up dense populations. Since they are so camouflaged and protected from insecticides, management of these insects can be difficult and time consuming. In mid-August the mature larvae stop feeding and attach their bags firmly to a twig. They close the open end of the bag and pupate within it.



Photo courtesy of NC State University
Bagworm larvae just starting to form bags while still feeding.



Photo courtesy of Maryland Extension
Evergreen trees defoliated by bagworms.

By mid-September the bagworm has completed its development, and adult males begin emerging from their bags. The male moth has a black, furry body and a feathery antenna. The four wings are almost transparent and have a wingspan of about 1 inch. The males fly about infested plants seeking out females. After mating, the male moth dies. The adult female bagworm does not look like a moth and never leaves her bag. She lacks eyes, antennae, wings, legs and functional mouth parts. She is maggot-like in appearance, soft-bodied and yellowish-white. A mated female lays between 500 and 1,000 eggs within her bag, after which she dies. The eggs remain within the bag throughout the winter until they hatch the following spring. There is one generation each year.

One of the most effective methods of treatment is hand-picking or cutting the bags off of the branches. When this is impractical or impossible, there are chemical control options available that should be applied when caterpillars are young because they are more vulnerable. Spinosad (Conserve) and Bt (Dipel) are both forms of biological control that are safer for the environment and beneficial insects. They must be applied in June or early July while the larvae are still feeding.

Azalea Lace Bug

Lace bugs cause yellow stippling damage to the top of azalea leaves by piercing the underside of the leaf and sucking out the fluids. Most lace bugs go unnoticed until leaf damage appears. Azalea lace bugs overwinter as eggs inserted into leaves along the medial vein. Thus, if a plant had azalea lace bugs last year it will certainly have them this year. Lace bugs can be controlled with horticultural oil or insecticidal soap if you can get good coverage. You can also use systemic insecticides such as imidacloprid.



Yellow stippling on the upper surface of the leaf and Lace Bugs underneath.

Plant Propagation

Making new plants from stem cuttings is something that is fun and easy to do. Annuals do best when they are propagated from seed and perennials are easily propagated by root division. Many of the succulent type plants will root and make new plants from a leaf cutting but shrubs are usually propagated by stem cuttings. Stem cuttings are usually 4" to 6" in length and typically no bigger than a pencil in diameter. Where ever a leaf is attached to the stem, it is called a node. Cuttings are best when they have 3 or 4 nodes. The bottom leaves are removed from the stem. A rooting hormone can be applied to the end of the cutting to give the plant an extra boost to encourage faster rooting. Rooting hormones can be purchased at most hardware stores as a small bottle of powder (ex. Bonide Rooting Powder). A small amount of the powder is applied to the end of the cutting before placing it into moist soil. A good propagation mix is 50% peat moss and 50% perlite. Fill a 4" or 6" pot with soil and water it well. The cuttings will be more stable in moist soil than in dry. Place the cuttings into the soil just deep enough that they stand upright but do not touch the bottom of the pot. Firm the soil around the cutting with your fingers and water the soil again. Place the pot of cuttings into a large clear plastic bag. The plastic will make a humid greenhouse type environment for the cuttings.

There are 2 factors required for successful propagation. The first is high humidity. Keeping the air around the cuttings as humid as possible is very important. Without roots, the stems can not take up water from the soil. If the air around the cuttings is dry, moisture in the leaves and stems will be lost to the air, the plant parts will dry up and the cuttings will die. If the air is humid, the leaves will hold their moisture giving the stems a chance to make roots. The second factor for successful propagation is taking the right size cutting at the right time of year. Some plants root best on older more mature wood from the previous year's growth. Other plants root best on softer wood from the current years new growth. The stems need to be large enough to hold enough moisture and energy to survive until the roots form but if they are too large they will not root well and many of them will die. In general, cuttings from deciduous plants (plants that loose their leaves in the fall and winter) are taken in June through August. Cuttings from evergreen plants are taken in August through December.

Water the cuttings if the soil becomes dry. Keep the cuttings in a shady place out of direct sun. Resist the urge to pull cuttings up out of the soil to check for roots. When new growth appears, it is a good indicator that roots have formed. Most plants will make roots in 4 to 10 weeks. Some may take up to 6 months.



It might be too late to plant cantaloupe, corn and cucumbers, but its not too late to plant beans, southern peas, pumpkins, sweet potatoes and tomato plants. Some of the common problems you might be seeing this time of year are blossom end rot on peppers and tomatoes and a decrease in tomato production due to extreme heat. When daytime temperatures exceed 85 degrees and nighttime temperatures exceed 72 degrees, tomato flowers will abort without setting fruit. Blossom end rot is not a disease, but a disorder. It is the result of a calcium deficiency in the developing tomato fruit. It doesn't necessarily mean that there is a lack of calcium in the soil, but that the calcium is unavailable. This can be minimized by consistent even watering. Water is required for the uptake of calcium by plant roots. Keeping soils evenly moist will keep calcium available for developing fruit.

Fertilizer should have been applied when the garden was first planted. To keep vegetables growing rapidly and continuously, extra fertilizer should be applied to the soil in the form of a side dressing. Side dressing can be applied on both sides of the row about 4 to 6 inches from the plant. Vegetable plants should be side dressed about midway through their maturity cycle. Some recommended times for side dressing are as follows:

Peas and Beans - just before flowering
 Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower - about 4 weeks after transplanting
 Eggplant, Peppers, Squash, Tomatoes - at blooming and when fruit set starts
 Cucumbers, cantaloupe, watermelons - as vines start to run

Vegetable Garden



Photo courtesy of NC State Extension

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

http://go.ncsu.edu/spring_vege_guide

Lawn Care

Centipedegrass is a slow growing, light green turf that uses very little fertilizer and is low maintenance. Although centipede grass is a relatively low maintenance grass, proper management is still required. It does not tolerate traffic, compaction, high phosphorus soils, low potassium soils, high pH, excessive thatch, drought, or heavy shade. Failure to green up in the spring or successful green up followed by decline and death in late spring and summer is a problem referred to as "centipede decline". Most centipede decline occurs in the spring and summer following a very cold winter. Avoiding over-fertilization, preventing thatch build up, irrigating during periods of drought and mowing at the proper height of 1 to 1.5 inches can help prevent centipede decline.

An acid soil pH of 5.5 is preferred. As the pH goes above 6.0, iron availability decreases causing the grass to become chlorotic and yellow. A high phosphorous level can also interfere with iron availability and lead to chlorosis. Thatch build-up prevents water from penetrating the soil and leads to shallow rooted grass that is more susceptible to heat, cold and drought damage. Mowing at the proper height and proper fertilization will help prevent thatch build-up. Centipedegrass only needs 1/2 to 1 pound of nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. per year, usually applied in May.

The use of products containing fertilizer and herbicide can cause centipede to become damaged. Centipede is very sensitive to some herbicides. Many of the "weed and feed" products are not formulated correctly for centipede. If you apply the product according to the recommended fertilization rate you may be applying too much nitrogen and / or too much herbicide. To prevent herbicide and fertilizer damage, fertilization and herbicide applications should be two separate events using products that are labeled for use on centipede.

For more information about lawn care go to:
http://go.ncsu.edu/nc_lawns



Photo courtesy of Iowa State Extension

Pruning

June and July are busy months for pruning shrubs. In June you can prune Flowering Almond, Acuba, Azaleas, Barberry, Bayberry, Boxwood, Broom, Daphne, Deutzia, Eleagnus, Forsythia, Harry Lauder's Walking Stick, Evergreen Holly, Indian Hawthorn, Juniper, Kerria, Leucothoe, Lilac, Mahonia, Mockorange, Osmanthus Holly, Photinia, Pieris, Pyracantha, Ligustrum, Quince, spring blooming Spirea (Bridalwreath and Snowmound), Viburnum, Weigela, Witchhazel, and Yew. You can prune Japanese Camellia until the end of June but do not prune Sasanqua Camellias anymore until March.

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.

All Bugs Good & Bad Webinar Series

Our webinar series continues with a close up look at Japanese Beetles. 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.

- **July** - No Webinar
- **August** - Japanese Beetles
- **September** - Bees, Wasps & Hornets

For more information contact deborah_foster@ncsu.edu



Photo courtesy of
Phil Pellitteri
University of Wisconsin

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