

UGA Extension Meriwether County ANR E-Newsletter

February 16, 2018

PEST OF THE WEEK

If you have a cool season vegetable garden and are growing any of the cole crops you may be seeing some problems. Due to the freezing weather we had at the beginning of the year which was followed by lots of rain, collards, broccoli, cabbage and other brassicas are showing symptoms (and signs) of white mold in commercial fields. The pathogen of this fungal disease is *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum*. Early in the disease cycle plants will have water-soaked looking tissue which can be seen in the cabbage image below. Next, white mycelial growth can be seen, as in the broccoli image below, which gives the disease its common name of white mold. Plant tissue that was damaged during the freeze was susceptible to infection by inoculum of this pathogen. Environmental conditions were also perfect for infection with lots of wet and cool weather following the freeze. There were few stretches when fields were able to dry out and slow or stop the spread of the disease. These conditions also made it difficult for anyone to spray fungicides. Another problem is that there is only one chemical, boscalid, that has efficacy on this pathogen and applications are limited to 2 per **year** (not 2 per growing season). After last week's clear and warmer weather sclerotium (see cabbage below) may develop on infected plants. These dark, hardened masses of fungal hyphae are potential sources of inoculum for years to come if allowed to drop to the soil. I recommend removing infected plants from the field and garden and destroy them or bag them and throw them away. These should not be composted unless you are certain that your compost pile heats to at least 120°-140° F throughout the pile.



CRIMES AGAINST PLANTS

It's that time again; when innocent plants in the landscape are butchered by so-called landscape professionals. The other day as I was leaving my office to make site visits a member of a landscape crew was firing up the chain saw to attack the crape myrtles. I left knowing that I would be doing some major cringing and cursing when I returned. In Extension literature it's referred to frequently as "Crape Murder" and it's in my top five list of crimes perpetuated by humans against plants. All of the small limbs are removed from the trees so only scaffold limbs or the trunk remain. Trees around the buildings here that were planted to shade parking lots have never been given the opportunity to serve that purpose. What really amazes me is that someone could actually think that plants are supposed to look this! (see images below). But just like other incorrect landscape practices, people see it frequently enough to believe that it must be right. Over the past twenty years I've heard a number of common reasons for this horrendous practice. The two most common are that the plants will have larger blooms or that the trees are too large for where they were planted. As for the first reason, a healthy large tree will have flowers just as large as a butchered one just lots more of them. A 30-40 foot tree covered in flowers and with a beautiful intact trunk will have much more aesthetic impact and value. And crape myrtle trees have both beautiful sinuous trunks and bark. Another benefit to having more flowers is that flowering will last longer; frequently for months. That tree will also give the benefit of shade during hot months and not block the warmth of the sun during cold months. Breeders have created varieties of crape myrtles that come in all sizes from 3-4 feet high and wide to ones like Natchez that will get over 30 feet high as possibly just as

wide. So be sure to plant a variety that won't outgrow its space. And if you have to keep whacking at one that you inherited go ahead and cut it down and replace it!

Historic southern towns such as Charleston and Savannah take great pride in their beautiful old crape myrtles. Crape myrtles were introduced to the United States over two hundred years ago and are one of the best adapted, long flowering trees in our landscape. Some might go so far to say that they are overplanted but I am not one of them. You can count on these trees to perform even during the hottest and driest years. Pests are typically not a problem if you choose carefully. Powdery mildew is generally the number one problem and there have been numerous resistant varieties released from breeding programs including the series of 31 varieties with Indian names from the U. S. National Arboretum. They come in all shades of pink from the dark fuchsia of 'Tonto' to the coral pink of 'Comanche' to the palest pink of 'Biloxi.' Possibly the best known is the white variety 'Natchez' mentioned above. My favorite is the purple flowering 'Catawba.' New growth in the spring is bronze and fall color is a beautiful orange-red. This tree remains in the 10-15 foot size making it a good selection for a smaller yard.

I could act embarrassed that these trees are in front of our office but I'm going to do my best to take the high road and use this as an educational opportunity. As an Extension Agent education is my main mission. So let's look at what is wrong about this type of pruning besides the fact that it ruins the aesthetics of the tree. The only reason for anyone to use a chain saw on a tree is to cut it down completely or to remove large dead branches and limbs. Chain saws are not meant for selective pruning which is the type of pruning that should be done on shrubs and trees. Chain saws make what are referred to as topping cuts. Topping cuts are not selective cuts. Selective (or thinning) cuts are made just beyond the branch collar of a lower, lateral branch. So new growth may emerge from that point as well as at even lower lateral buds. In removing all branches with topping cuts there are no lateral buds for new growth. What usually sprouts are dormant adventitious buds that lead to epicormic branches. Frequently these branches do not originate from deep in the structure of the trunk. There may also be underlying scars and defects impacting the internal integrity of epicormic branches. These epicormic branches can be very weak and are not the type of branches that you want above your head, house or car. Another problem with topping is that these are really large cuts that do not have any branch collar tissue surrounding them. That branch collar tissue retains a cambium layer that gives rise to the callus tissue that compartmentalizes a wounding cut internally and then grows to close the wound externally. Without that protection the wounded tissue is likely to decay with parts of the tree eventually dying. You can see that happening in the second image below. Removing branches over and over will reduce the tree's ability to photosynthesize and feed itself. Over time the tree will be so starved that it can no longer produce more branches to replace the ones cut off. Then you have a dead tree to remove. And, perhaps best of all, just think of the money that is spent paying folks to basically kill your tree.

Choose trees carefully before you plant. And talk to your local extension agent before you or someone else starts whacking away at the trees in your landscape.



GATE CARD UPDATE

There are some changes happening with the GATE Card and some are in place already.

On the down side for some: GDA has moved to an **online only** GATE application process. The “printable” application form has been removed from the GATE “Related Resources” tab in hopes of encouraging applicants to apply electronically. GDA is hoping that County Extension staff will continue to offer electronic enrollment assistance through their county offices for those eligible producers who do not have computer or internet access. Online transactions will remain at \$20 and payable by Visa, Mastercard, or electronic check, and therefore a \$5 savings over mailed applications.

On the up side: GDA **no longer requires** the “Secure and Verifiable” affidavit declaring citizenship or the accompanying identification.

Our office will continue to offer assistance to those who need it-just let us know when you plan to come by. You can still email questions to GDA at farmtax@agr.georgia.gov or call 1-855-327-6829.

OTHER UGA ANR PROGRAMS

2018 Middle Georgia Peach Update

February 20th
USDA Southeastern Fruit and Nut Research Lab
21 Dunbar Road, Byron GA 31008

2018 Middle Georgia Pecan Update

February 28th
Flint Energies Building
3 S. Macon Street
Reynolds, GA 31076
If you plan to attend either of these meetings please contact Jeff Cook at mackiv@uga.edu

UGA Hosts Inaugural Hay and Baleage Production Short Course

February 22 at the Carroll County Extension Office
March 8 and 9 at the Burke County Extension Office (Waynesboro, GA).

Stored forages, such as hay and baleage, are a critical component of agriculture in Georgia, carrying livestock producers through times when forage is scarce. This year, the UGA Forage Team is debuting a new event format for hay and baleage producers. The program will focus on techniques for producing high yields of high quality hay and baleage in the Southeast. This Short Course will be valuable for serious hay producers looking to enhance their production system and learn more about modern hay and baleage-making techniques and technology. UGA specialists and researchers will present information on the hay and baleage-making and storage techniques, as well as provide updates on current research. Registration for the short course is \$65. Registration includes a 300+ page Hay and Baleage notebook, a weed ID book, lunches and refreshments.

For more information or to register please visit:

<http://georgiaforages.caes.uga.edu/events/HBSC18/documents/HBSCAgendaFeb2218.pdf>

Spotted Wing Drosophila Webinar

February 23 12 pm-1 pm
Concerned about spotted wing drosophila and want to learn more about control practices for this pest of small fruits? The webinar will include an overview of spotted wing drosophila research, an update on the native biocontrol agents that have been found in surveys at farms from Oregon to Maine, and the latest information on their search for parasitic wasps from Asia. The webinar is free and open to everyone.

Register with your name and email address at [Good Bugs vs Bad: Using Biological Controls in SWD Management](#) (right click to open).

Southern Women in Ag: Hands-On Workshop

March 13 8:30 am – 5:00 pm

Coweta County Fairgrounds 275 Pine Road, Newnan GA 30263

The training is for all women interested or involved in farming and/or cattle production. Participants will receive instruction on:

- Cattle handling
- Fencing
- Tractors
- Trucks/Trailers
- Media Training

Cost is \$30.00 and due by March 5. Space is limited to 30 participants. Lunch is included.

To register please contact the Coweta County Office at 770-254-2620 or uge2077@uga.edu

KEEP MERIWETHER BEAUTIFUL

Spring Great American Clean Up Day in Meriwether

April 21 8:00 am – 4:00 pm.

Folks are encouraged to team up to pick up trash in their towns and neighborhoods. KMB will supply litter bags, gloves and t-shirts. Containers for collected trash will be placed in different areas of the county.

Volunteers are also needed to help Public Works Department employees manage the container sites.

Registration forms will be available on March 1st at the Meriwether County Administration Building. For more information please contact Jane Fryer at 706-672-3463 or J.Fryer@meriwethercountyga.gov

Have a great weekend!

Susan