

TSU NURSERY NEWS TO USE

FEBRUARY 2023

Granulate Ambrosia Beetles (*Xylosandrus crassiusculus*) are pests of dogwood, redbud, maple, ornamental cherry, Japanese maple, crape myrtle and many fruit trees. Females bore into twigs, branches, or small trunks of live trees. Once inside, the beetles inoculate the tree with ambrosia fungus and lay eggs to produce a brood. Damage can be clearly seen from the sawdust strands exuding from the holes drilled by the female (photo right). In addition to direct damage to the tree, secondary pathogens may find their way inside the holes once the female has bore inside. While typically active in early March, initial flights may occur once temperatures exceed 70°F occurring as early as February. It takes 55 days to complete one generation and the adults overwinter in galleries within the trees. The beetles feed on the ambrosia fungus as they develop so it is difficult to control them once they have made it inside. Best management strategy for controlling ambrosia beetles is to maintain healthy trees and to apply pyrethroids 2 to 3 weeks before beetles are in flight and reapply every 2 weeks throughout the summer.



Boring dust from adult beetles on a cherry tree PHOTOGRAPH BY Johnathan

WEED OF THE MONTH: Yellow Nutsedge

Though it is early to be talking about applying post emergent herbicides now is the time to apply pre-emergent herbicides for control of several highly problematic nursery weeds such as the featured weed yellow nutsedge. Yellow nutsedge is a warm-season perennial weed that spreads not only by seed but also rhizomes and tubers. This weed thrives in hot weather and where soils are poorly drained which may include nursery walkways, drainage ditches, retention ponds and around standing water.

Though very difficult to control by physically removing the plants yellow nutsedge can be managed more easily by allowing proper drainage in wet areas. In addition to cultural and physical tactics, pre-emergent herbicides applied to nursery areas around early March and re-applied in April can effectively prevent seed sprouting weeds from germinating. Dimethenamid is a pre-emergent herbicide labeled for use in container nurseries against yellow nutsedge and many other nursery weeds. Proper application of the herbicide can help deplete the weed seed bank and manage many seed sprouting weeds. While this shouldn't be the only measure of control for nutsedge it certainly is a best management practice to adapt in the nursery and begin thinking about before Spring.



Photo by Joseph LaForest, University of Georgia,





Bronzing on conifers due to winter weather injury. Photo credit: Natalie Bumgarner.

WINTER INJURY: This past December was a rough month for many outdoor plants which include ornamentals. Symptoms of cold damage should be apparent in the landscape and nursery resembling dead tissue as pictured left by the bronze needles on this conifer. Freeze damage can also be identified by symptoms including cracking or splitting in woody trunks or stems, flaccid or discolored foliage, scorched foliage or flowers, wilting foliage or sagging branches. Although unsightly and worrisome that the plant could be dead it is advised that leaving the plant alone until Spring could be the best course of action. Pruning now could further damage the plant if still alive by exposing living tissues to cold temperatures ahead. Once the plant has begun to grow in healthy areas and the cold has passed, it will be easy to see areas of the plant that are necrotic and need to be pruned. Any slimy, softened or watery tissues that present a rotting odor should be pruned. Only dead tissues should be pruned as over pruning will stress the plants. Look for green healthy tissues and

stop pruning so that the plant can begin recovery from those sites. Over watering during this time can stress plants by promoting new growth rather than aid recovery. Moderate watering or drip irrigation is recommended. Avoid applying fertilizers for the same reason as it will promote too much growth to a damaged plant.



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