Garden Center Sales

The weather for the last three weekends has been perfect and garden centers are reporting strong sales on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. The cool weather and sunshine are creating perfect conditions for customers to buy plants. The rains have been frequent, but mainly confined to the weekdays, so it is generally working out well. This change in weather is great news after the dismal sales period in March and April. More nice weather is forecasted for this coming weekend as well.

Golden Tortoise Beetles

Golden tortoise beetles have been active over the last few weeks. This beetle is found on plants in the morninglory family so garden center customers might be asking what is causing damage to their sweet potato vines. The holes in the foliage are usually smoother than damage caused by slugs. Coloring of adults ranges from a golden metallic color (sometimes with black) to shades of orange. The larvae carry their fecal matter and cast skins attached to posterior spines.

**Control:** There is one generation per year; control is usually not necessary.
Impatiens Downy Mildew

Impatiens downy mildew has been reported on plants in retail outlets in nearby states recently, so if you grow or plant garden impatiens, be alert for symptoms of this disease. Impatiens downy mildew, caused by the fungus-like microorganism *Plasmopara obducens*, is favored by cool, moist conditions, and affects both seed and cutting propagated garden impatiens, *Impatiens walleriana*. New Guinea impatiens are tolerant of this disease. Look for slight light green mottling or stippling on one or a few leaves as the early symptoms of impatiens downy mildew. Infected leaves may curl downward. If you look at the undersides of these leaves, you will see the white fuzzy growth of the pathogen. As the disease progresses in the landscape, infected plants will be stunted, and leaves and flowers drop off leaving bare, leafless green stems. Greenhouse growers who produce garden impatiens should use a fungicide rotation program throughout the production cycle to protect plants from downy mildew infection (for examples of such fungicide programs, see this information from the University of Massachusetts). However, fungicides do not cure infected plants, so all symptomatic plants must be bagged and discarded. It is very important to scout impatiens regularly for symptoms, making sure to check the undersides of leaves. In the landscape, remove infected plants and all plant debris, and plant other annuals in the beds. Avoid planting garden impatiens in a bed with a history of the disease, as the pathogen produces thick-walled spores that may overwinter in plant debris. Take this opportunity to try other shade tolerant plants like coleus, begonia, caladium and torenia.

We are interested in knowing the extent of this disease in our area. If you think you have impatiens downy mildew in greenhouse or landscape plantings, please contact me (Karen Rane) at the UMD Plant Diagnostic Lab (phone 301-405-1611, email rane@umd.edu).
Spittlebugs
Spittlebugs are active on herbaceous plants in the landscape. Look for white, frothy spittle on plant stems and foliage on a wide range of herbaceous plants. There is also a species that is found on pine, fir and spruce. The nymphs feed on plant sap from under frothy, spittle-like foam which protects them from predators, parasites and dry weather. If you examine the spittle closely, you will find the nymphs within.
Control: Usually not necessary for this pest. This pest has a wide range of natural enemies.

June 19, 2014 – A Chance for the Horticulture Industry to Learn and Have Fun
Tidal Creek Growers in Davidsonville will open their doors for The Maryland Greenhouse Growers’ Association and the University of Maryland Extension. This event will be both educational and good general fun. There will be competitive games organized by Ginny Rosenkranz, entertaining live music, and great food. Bring your family along to enjoy the late afternoon to evening event.

Tidal Creek Growers is a plant production greenhouse operation that is known for its production of high quality greenhouse plants. The site for the field day will feature over 5 acres of greenhouse growing area. The owner is Jake Van Wingerden and the head grower is Mike Leubecker who will lead the tours of the facilities.

The featured topic will be: What do Garden Centers Want from Greenhouse Growers?
Featured Speaker: Carrie Engel, Valley View Garden Center and Nursery

For details and to register, go to http://extension.umd.edu/ipm/conferences

Upcoming Programs
Go to http://extension.umd.edu/ipm/conferences

MGGA Field Day
June 19, 2014 (afternoon through early evening)
Location: Tidal Creek Growers, Davidsonville, MD

Greenhouse Biocontrol Conference
August 6, 2014
Location: Maritime Institute, Linthicum, MD
http://extension.umd.edu/ipm/conferences

Stormwater Management Program
August 20 and 21, 2014

TWO Locations:
August 20 - Montgomery County Extension Office, Derwood, MD
August 21 - Robinson Nature Center, Columbia, MD
Details will be posted when available

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