Botrytis

This is the time of year when periods of cool, cloudy weather favor outbreaks of *Botrytis* in greenhouses. This ubiquitous fungus can survive on the tiniest bits of plant debris and produces loads of air-borne spores. *Botrytis* infections often begin on older, senescing leaves, flower petals or bruised or damaged plant parts. Rough handling of transplants and deep planting (where stems and leaf bases are immersed in the potting medium) can favor *Botrytis* infections. Long leaf wetness periods (8-12 hours), high humidity and close plant spacing also encourage *Botrytis* blight.

An integrated approach combining sanitation, cultural practices and fungicide applications, is the most effective way to minimize *Botrytis* problems. Keep benches and floors clean of plant debris and make sure plants are handled carefully to minimize injury. Increase air circulation and plant spacing to promote drying of plant surfaces after irrigation. Heating and venting the greenhouse for about 10 minutes during the evening, to exchange warm, moist air with cooler outside air, will help reduce humidity in the greenhouse. Fungicide applications may be necessary when weather favors disease development. Products such as Decree (fenhexamid), Daconil (chlorothalonil), Chipco 26019 (iprodione), and Medallion (fluidioxonil) are reported to be effective – check labels for additional information. It is important to rotate fungicides among different mode of action groups (or FRAC codes) to avoid resistance in *Botrytis* populations. Do not rely on fungicides alone to manage *Botrytis* – sanitation and environmental management are also very important.

More information on the management of *Botrytis* blight, including a list of fungicides, can be found at the following link: [Botrytis Blight of Greenhouse Crops](#), from University of Massachusetts Extension

Monitoring for Iris Borers - A Request from Stanton Gill

There is a new pheromone that is available to track iris borer. I need a couple of good sites and volunteers with large plantings of iris that could place out pheromone traps. We would like you to record male flight activity and send the data to me. Don’t worry – it just attracts the males not the females so it will not increase your population at the site. If interested call me at 410-868-9400 or email me at Sgill@umd.edu.
Spinach
A sample of a spinach plant was sent in from a central Maryland greenhouse operation this week. The grower thought they might be seeing either insect eggs or mite eggs on the leaves. We examined the leaves under a dissecting microscope. If you look closely you will see that the spheres are irregular in size. Most insects and mites lay eggs of approximately equal size. These appear to be trichome hairs on the spinach leaf that are exuding a solution from the leaf.

Operator Certification (FTC) for Writing Nursery Nutrient Management Plans
April 7th, 2015
9 to 3:30 PM
Central Maryland Research and Education Center
11975-A Homewood Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042

Nursery Operator Certification (FTC) for writing nursery nutrient management plans will be offered to growers who are interested in attaining Farmer Training Certification for writing nutrient management plans. This training program will assist you in writing a nutrient management plan for your nursery or greenhouse operation. You must write a nursery nutrient management plan if you use fertilizers and you gross $2500 or more per year in sales. With this certification, you will be able to sign off and submit your own plan and annual implementation reports.

Each program consists of a Training Day and an Exam/Signoff Day. The Training Day will consist of learning the plan-writing process. After the Training Day you will have about 5 weeks, during which time you will study the Nursery Nutrient Management Training Manual and develop your plan. The Exam/Signoff Day will be for taking the exam and going over your newly developed plan (or renewing your old plan).

The process is relatively simple for small (or low-risk) operations, so if your operation size is less than 5 acres, we would strongly encourage you to think about becoming a certified operator. If your operation is larger than 5 acres, we would still encourage you to become a certified operator, even though the nutrient management process may be a little more complicated.
The first day of the program will be **April 7th, 2015** from **9 AM to 3:30 PM** at **Central Maryland Research and Education Center** just outside Ellicott City (address above). There will be a **$20 Maryland Department of Agriculture** fee to cover lunch.

We have tentatively scheduled the Exam/Signoff Day for May 12th at a location to be announced at the April 7th training day. After passing the exam, you will be able to “sign off” on your plan and submit it.

To express your interest in taking this training, please contact Mike Webster, Maryland Department of Agriculture at (410) 841-5957. State that it is for **Nursery FTC**.

Call Andrew Ristvey (410) 827-8056 x113 for directions to the Central Maryland Research and Education Center or for any other questions.

**Upcoming Conferences**

**Greenhouse Tour and Picnic**  
June 25, 2015  
Location: Greenstreet Growers, Lothian, MD

**Alternative Crops for Greenhouse Production: Conference and Tour**  
August 5 and 6, 2015  
Location: Brookside Gardens, Wheaton, MD (August 5th lectures)