



# BRANCHING OUT

An Integrated Pest Management  
NEWSLETTER  
for Trees and Shrubs

Volume 33 No. 3 May 8, 2026

## Contents...

### Scouting Report

**Conifers:** Cedar-Apple Rust, Cedar-Quince Rust, Diplodia Tip Blight, Elongate Hemlock Scale, Eriophyid Mites, European Pine Sawfly, Gymnosporangium Rust, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, Kuwana Pine Mealybug, Phytophthora Root Rot, Pine Needle Scale, Pine Tip or Shoot Moth, Rhabdocline Needle Cast, Spruce Spider Mite, Taxus Bud Mite .....1-2

**Broad-leaved:** Boxwood Leafminer, Boxwood Psyllid, Eastern Tent Caterpillar, Pine Oystershell Scale, Rhododendron Chewing Damage, Slime Flux, Sycamore Anthracnose.....2-3

**Feature:** Submitting a Quality Sample to the Diagnostic Clinic.....Insert

**Under the Scope:** Balsam-fir Root Aphids, Black Spot of Elm, Rhabdocline, Weir's Cushion Rust...3

**Miscellany** ..... 3-4

**Phenology, Growing Degree Days, Supporters** .....4

### Thank You to Our Scouts and Diagnosticians

Amy Albam, Carol Bradford, Dawn Dailey O'Brien, Don Gabel, Sandra Jensen, Hillary Jufer, Karen Klingenberger, Elizabeth Lamb, Jen Lerner, Jessica O'Callahan, Zaidee Powers, Alice Raimondo, Mina Vescera, Mike Voss, Sandra Vultaggio

### Scouting Report Notations:

- (#) Numbers in regular type note plate(s) in *Insects that Feed on Trees and Shrubs* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) by W.T. Johnson and H.H. Lyon.
- (#) Numbers in italics note plate(s) in *Diseases of Trees and Shrubs* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) by W.A. Sinclair, H.H. Lyon, and W.T. Johnson.

## Scouting Report

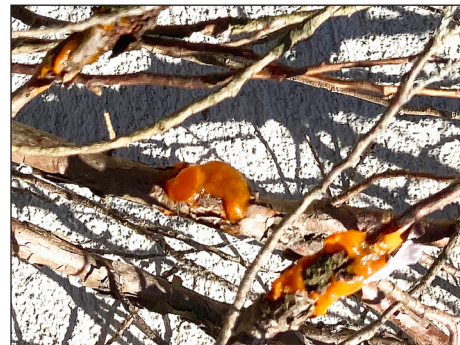
### Conifers

**Cedar-Apple Rust (129-133)**—on eastern redcedar in Westchester, Rockland and Suffolk Cos. Round galls and variably developed orange telial horns seen now. Expect basidiospore release shortly, triggered by rain.



*Cedar-apple rust gall (Chris Kempton)*

**Cedar-Quince Rust (129-133)**—on junipers in Nassau, Suffolk, Rockland and Westchester Cos. Orange blobs (telia) are showing now on twigs of juniper hosts of quince rust (*Gymnosporangium clavipes*) This rust is often associated with dieback on juniper. The telia emerge directly from rough, sometimes perennial, swellings on stem or branch tissue rather than from round galls as with cedar-apple rust.



*Cedar-quince rust (Joe Savage)*

**Diplodia Tip Blight (64)**—on Leyland cypress in Suffolk Co. This tree is susceptible to *Diplodia cupressi*; it causes

flagging of 3-12” or more. Cultural stress is likely a factor in this disease just as it is for *Diplodia* tip blight on pine, caused by a different species.



*Diplodia tip blight (Margery Daughtrey)*

**Elongate Hemlock Scale (45)**—eggs in Westchester Co., adults in Monroe Co.



*Elongate hemlock scale, with a few hemlock woolly adelgid egg masses (Karen Klingenberger)*

**Eriophyid Mites (54)**—active on hemlock in Westchester Co.

**European Pine Sawfly (2)**—larvae on mugo pines in Westchester Co.



*European pine sawfly larvae (Hillary Jufer)*

**Gymnosporangium Rust (129-133)**—rust (possibly *Gymnosporangium globosum*) seen on juniper in Westchester Co.



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension



*Gymnosporangium rust* (Hillary Jufer)

**Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (32)**—crawlers in Suffolk, Rockland and Westchester Cos.; egg masses in Monroe Co.

**Kuwana Pine Mealybug**—unconfirmed, on *Pinus rigida* in Suffolk Co. Tentative ID of small white nymphs based upon photos. This insect is established mostly in milder coastal areas most often encountered on naturalized Japanese black pine, resulting in heavy sooty mold on foliage.



Possible *Kuwana pine mealybug* (Michael Voss)

**Phytophthora Root Rot (182)**—on Fralsam™ fir in Ontario Co. Firs in Christmas tree farms or landscapes may exhibit slow growth and red foliage as they die from root infection by various *Phytophthora* species, especially in heavy clay soils.



*Phytophthora root rot* (Margery Daughtrey)

**Pine Needle Scale (47)**—on pines in Westchester Co.

**Pine Tip or Shoot Moth (17-18)**—causing tip dieback on mugo pine in Westchester Co. Affected terminals

will have hollow centers, possibly larvae present within. Several species cause similar damage. European pine shoot moth-affected shoots typically have one caterpillar while there may be 2 or more Nantucket pine tip moth larvae per shoot.



*Pine tip shoot moth larva* (possibly European PTSM) (Hillary Jufer)

**Rhabdocline Needle Cast (15)**—on Douglas-fir in Westchester and Steuben Cos.



*Rhabdocline needle cast* (Sandra Jensen)

**Spruce Spider Mite (52)**—eggs hatched in Westchester Co.

**Taxus Bud Mite (230)**—immature mites in buds in Westchester Co., distorted foliage from 2025 infestation in Bronx Co.

### Broad-leaved Trees and Shrubs

**Boxwood Leafminer (94)**—pupae and late-stage larvae in leaf “blisters” in Suffolk Co. Adults should be emerging very soon.



*Boxwood leafminer larva inside leaf* (Michael Voss)

**Boxwood Psyllid (137)**—leaf cupping from psyllids and leafminer injury in Monroe Co.



Cupped leaves from boxwood psyllid. Brown spots likely prior year's leafminer ovipositor damage. (Karen Klingenberg)

**Eastern Tent Caterpillar (76)**—larvae and “tents” in Suffolk, Rockland, and Westchester Cos.

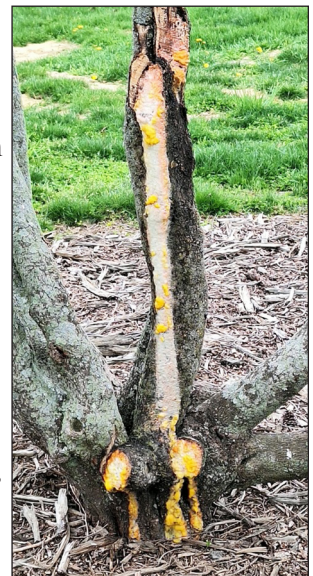
**Pine Oystershell Scale**—on mugo pine in Westchester Co. Similar to Maskell scale which has a larger host range, often seen on *Cryptomeria*.



*Pine oystershell scale* (Hillary Jufer)

**Rhododendron Chewing Damage (66)**—on 2025 leaves in Monroe Co. possibly from fruitworm caterpillar. Sparse tomentum (hairs) also seen on upper surface of leaves. Tomentum and indumentum (i.e., felty growth under leaves) can be dense and are normal characteristics of some species/cultivars. See more: <https://www.rhododendron.org/blog/?view=plink&id=181>

**Slime Flux**—shown on a *Styrax*, this phenomenon is also known as “deer vomit.” It appears as orange goo drooling down trunks in spring on recently pruned trees, composed of various fungi



*Slime flux, aka "deer vomit"* (Timm Steele)

that capitalize on the sugar in the sap. Usually *Fusicolla merismoides* is present, but yeasts and other organisms often join the feast. Slime flux is not thought to injure the tree.

**Sycamore Anthracnose (51)**—

causing twig dieback on London plane in Suffolk Co. Not every London plane selection is highly resistant to this disease, so sometimes you'll see



*Sycamore anthracnose witches' brooms (Margery Daughtrey)*

profuse or arthritic-looking growth on a tree due to repeated twig dieback. When buds are killed by early spring infection, clumps of shoots form that look like witches' brooms.

**Under the Scope:**

**Reports from Diagnostic Labs**

**Balsam-fir Root Aphids**—on Fraser fir roots in Westchester Co. Probably *Prociphilus americanus*, which also feeds on new growth (or other parts) of *Fraxinus* (ash) in spring, migrating to *Abies* (firs) in summer where it forms waxy root colonies, before new generation migrates back to ash in late summer/fall. Some may remain on fir all year. Lilac (*Syringa*) is also a reported summer host. This aphid lacks the typical "tailpipes" (cornicles) seen on most other aphid species. More at: [https://influentialpoints.com/Gallery/Prociphilus\\_americanus\\_balsam-fir\\_root\\_aphid.htm](https://influentialpoints.com/Gallery/Prociphilus_americanus_balsam-fir_root_aphid.htm)



*Balsam-fir root aphids (Sandra Jensen)*

**Black Spot of Elm (47)**—elms showed early symptoms & signs of black spot (anthracnose). Hybrid and Wych elms exhibiting early symptoms and signs of black spot (anthracnose). Conidia

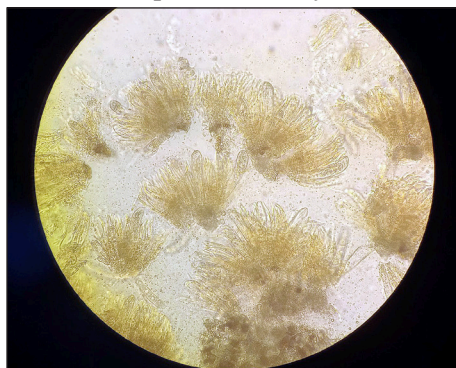
developing from small fruiting bodies on leaves; leaves with many spots are yellowing.



*Above: black spot on elm leaf; right: spores of black spot under magnification (Sandra Jensen)*



**Rhabdocline Needle Cast (15)**—on Douglas fir from Steuben Co. Some small dark spots on needles looked similar to Swiss needlecast, but microscopic inspection indicated it was a superficial fungus. Rhabdocline fruiting bodies were swelling and splitting open; this typically coincides with budbreak. The sample had swollen buds showing a little green; asci have developed in those fruiting bodies, but spores are not yet mature.



*Fungal spores of Rhabdocline developing now within asci on Doug-fir needles. (Sandra Jensen)*

**Weir's Cushion Rust (143)**—aka spruce needle rust, on blue spruce in Westchester Co. Most rusts have two

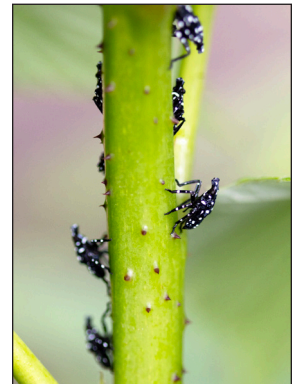


*Weir's cushion rust (Hillary Jufer)*

hosts; this rust is autoecious, completes its lifecycle on one host. Prolonged wet weather increases spore production and severity. This rust can infect other spruces; white, black, red are most common.

**Miscellany**

**Spotted lanternfly egg hatch underway** in southern NY State. Late April is generally when first nymphs appear in warmest NY climate



*Spotted lanternfly 1st instar nymphs (Shari Romar)*

zones (around NYC). The small black, white-spotted nymphs are very active and eventually disperse around the landscape to feed on many kinds of plants. Two maps show egg hatch progress - one at Penn State (<https://tools.cei.psu.edu/slf/>), a second at the National Phenology Network ([https://usanpn.org/data/maps/forecasts/spotted\\_lanternfly](https://usanpn.org/data/maps/forecasts/spotted_lanternfly)), which also predicts adult SLF emergence later in summer.

**Box Tree Moth**—

overwintering larvae already active in western NY; check inside plant canopies for signs of feeding damage or the insects in areas in and near



*Box tree moth larvae (Hannah Nadel, USDA)*

where BTM is established. More info and insecticide options are at <https://tinyurl.com/NYSIPM-BoxTreeMoth>. NY has enacted an intrastate quarantine to slow/prevent spread of BTM, see <https://agriculture.ny.gov/plant-industry/box-tree-moth>. Federal quarantine areas can be seen at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-pests-diseases/box-tree-moth/box-tree-moth-federal-quarantine-boundary-viewer>. Pheromone traps can also be used for monitoring (males only, the pheromone does not attract females or start a new infestation); bucket-type traps work best for capturing the moths.

Branching Out  
Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology  
Cornell University  
334 Plant Science Building  
Ithaca, NY 14853

**Check (for) ticks:** Though some ticks can be active during mild winter conditions, spring brings increased risk. EPA's Find the Repellent that is Right for You is a great resource: <https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you>. UMass some years ago had a fantastic education series TickTalk with Tick Report Webinars, archived at <https://www.umass.edu/agriculture-food-environment/landscape/education-events/ticktalk-with-tickreport-webinars> (deer tick nymph, Dan Gilrein)



**Looking for even more landscape info?** UMass's Landscape Message has great information often relevant to our State, too, though some pest/disease management recommendations differ: <https://www.umass.edu/agriculture-food-environment/landscape/landscape-message>

## Phenology by County

- Monroe:** snowball/cranberry viburnum, common lilacs  
**Rockland:** apple, crabapple, barberry, black cherry, bitternut hickory, bush honeysuckle, Schip laurel, Meserve hollies, lilac, Paulownia, pin/red/white oak, autumn olive, sassafras, wisteria, various viburnums  
**Suffolk:** flowering dogwood, crabapple, common lilacs, Paulownia, Chinese wisteria, sassafras, Japanese kerria, beach plum, Japanese barberry, Kwanzan cherry, 'Hershey Red' azalea, autumn olive  
**Tompkins:** saucer magnolia, crabapple, common lilacs, Kwanzan cherry, snowball viburnum  
**Westchester:** flowering dogwood, common lilacs, andromeda, Kwanzan cherry, crabapple, azalea

*Dan Gilrein, Karen Snover-Clift, Margery Daughtrey & Shari Romar, editors*

## Growing Degree Days

As of May 5, 2026

Station	GDD <sub>50</sub>	Station	GDD <sub>50</sub>
Albany	181	Ithaca	143
Binghamton	187	New Brunswick, NJ	341
Boston, MA	98	Poughkeepsie	229
Bridgeport, CT	146	Riverhead	194
Buffalo	151	Rochester	178
Central Park	333	Syracuse	205
Farmingdale	181	Watertown	84
Hartford, CT	203	Westchester	212
		Worcester, MA	111

## Our Financial Supporters

*We thank our supporters for their generous gifts:*

- ▶ New York State Turfgrass Association
- ▶ New York State Arborists-ISA Chapter
- ▶ The Orentreich Family Foundation
- ▶ Almstead Tree & Shrub Care Co.
- ▶ Bartlett Tree Experts
- ▶ Michael Bellantoni
- ▶ Evan Dackow / Jolly Green Tree & Shrub Care
- ▶ Long Island Arboricultural Association
- ▶ Stephen Raimondo
- ▶ K. Biene Schaefer / Atlantic Nurseries
- ▶ Shreiner Tree Care
- ▶ Michael Sperber / Nature's Guardian, Inc.
- ▶ Edward Wade / Wade Tree Care, Inc.
- ▶ David Fernandez / Cayuga Landscape Co.
- ▶ TB Tree Care & Associates
- ▶ Urban Arborists
- ▶ Bayport Flower Houses, Inc.
- ▶ Tim & Gail Blenk



## Submitting a Quality Sample to the Diagnostic Clinic

Karen Snover-Clift, Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic Director, Cornell University (photos courtesy of the author)

### What You Do in Step 1 Affects the Entire Diagnostic Process

Receiving an accurate diagnosis from a suspected plant pathogen or pest sample submission requires a team effort to be successful. For the diagnostician to produce a diagnosis that finds the initial cause of the problem, the diagnostic clinic staff rely on the submitter to:

**1. gather** the best representation of the issue to include early symptoms through more advanced damage; **2. take pictures and describe** the first observation of an abnormal appearance and the progression of symptoms over time (Figure 1); **3. provide background information** on the age of the planting, site characteristics, weather conditions, soil type, drainage, previous plantings, etc.;

**4. package the sample** to protect it from damage enroute; and **5. deliver or send** the package quickly.

A diagnosis is essential for managing plant disease and pest problems. The PDDC's brochure is titled "Test, Don't Guess" because when one does not learn the accurate cause of the problem, it's like a shot in the dark...one has no idea what the target is, wasting time and money trying different management methods (Figure 2).

To obtain an accurate diagnosis, the diagnostician must search for clues and tease out the facts to identify the core culprit...that initial biotic or abiotic cause of the damage. Plant pests and pathogens have complex life cycles, host ranges, climate preferences, etc. that make identifying their



Figure 1: Example of a photo to include with the submission, showing aspects of the site where affected tree is growing.

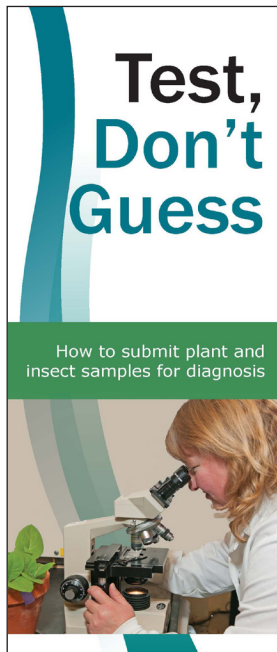


Figure 2: Clinic brochure.

presence quite difficult at times. For example, if we receive a red maple with a request to test for Bacterial Leaf Scorch (BLS) in April, we will tell the submitter BLS samples are processed only in September because the pathogen is at its highest level at that time. If the test is done in April and the result is negative, we really don't know if it is a true negative or just the wrong time of year. When plants become stressed, secondary agents often take advantage of their weakened condition and they may hinder finding the accurate initial cause, in this case the stress. Because of these factors, a quick, accurate diagnosis requires a team effort of an experienced diagnostician that understands the complexity of plant pathogens and the submitter that takes the steps to send a quality sample.

### Ask questions

The submitter should ask themselves: what does the damage look like? Where am I seeing the damage and is there a pattern? When did I first notice it? Is damage found on more than one plant? If so, which ones? Always include the plant species and cultivar, if known. Think about events that may have occurred at the site recently. Was there a hailstorm? Did temperatures quickly drop or increase? Has there been construction at the site?

If submitters are unsure what to collect and how to submit, they should consider looking at the [PDDC website](#) to find useful guides. Another option is emailing the PDDC staff who are available to assist with determining the best material to send.

### Selecting material to submit

Look for patterns of damage in the whole area, on an individual plant, and on individual plant parts. Select material that shows various stages of damage, gathering early to late stages of symptom expression. Also look for

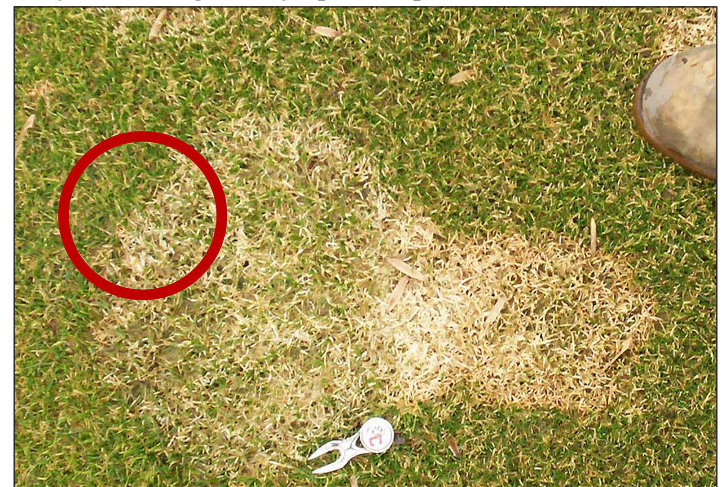


Figure 3: Red circle indicating good area to collect sample.

areas that display the margin between dead and healthy tissue. The margin is often the location of the primary pathogen, while necrotic areas often contain numerous secondary organisms taking advantage of the damaged tissue (Figure 3).

When possible, include the entire plant so the diagnostician can view from buds to roots and everything in-between. We understand this is not possible when the host is a mature tree. In that case, include the parts of the tree that are symptomatic. This can be difficult if the tree is wilting in the upper crown. A homeowner should seek assistance from a certified arborist, an expert with the tools to collect those samples that are out of reach to a homeowner. If submitting seedlings, fruits or vegetables, be sure to send multiple examples for comparison.

Consider including photographs. As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. Pictures show the distribution of the symptoms on the plant of concern but may also show surrounding plant species and whether they are healthy or not, they may show a nearby building and features such as downspout placement, or they may show evidence of recent construction performed in the area (Figure 1).

### Include the details

If sending numerous samples for which individual answers are needed, be sure to package each sample separately and assign a unique identifier. Consider using short descriptions such as “driveway garden” or “Elm Street sidewalk.” If multiple samples are taken from one location such as the back yard, consider including a map with letter or number designations for each sample’s location (Figure 4). If the submitter suspects a specific disease, that should be stated so the diagnostician includes a response of why this was or was not the disease confirmed.

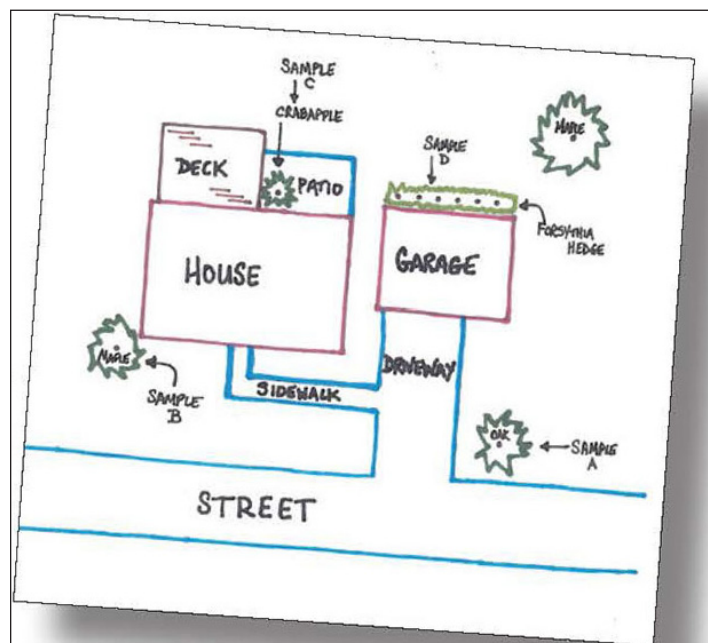


Figure 4: Map included in submission to show plant placement at site.

### Packaging and shipping

After doing all of these steps, be sure to package the sample so it arrives in prime condition. Never water plants or moisten packaging material as this can cause secondary

organisms to grow and overcome any evidence of the primary pathogen. Use a sturdy box to protect the material and tape all openings (Figure 5). Wrap the growing media of potted plants with plastic or paper to minimize movement onto leaves during shipment or remove the potting mix and send as bareroot plants. Wrap stems with dry papers or foam to reduce breakage during shipment. Cut branches and twigs into manageable lengths, including 8 to 10 segments that are 6-10” in length. Pack branches, stems and leaves in a labeled and sealed plastic bag (Figure 6). Ship samples early in the week so they do not sit in transit over the weekend.

Refer to our website for sample submission forms and more collecting and packaging tips: <http://plantclinic.cornell.edu>

### Follow us!

Keep updated on the news from the Clinic—follow us on our new Instagram channel at [cornell\\_plant\\_disease\\_clinic](https://www.instagram.com/cornell_plant_disease_clinic)



Figure 5 (above): Example of how to prepare stems, label bags, and prepare for shipment. Figure 6 (below): Air-filled bags bracing a potted plant to limit movement and ensure intact arrival.

### Quick Guide to Collecting and Sending Samples:

1. Collect early to late symptoms.
2. Take pictures and describe problem.
3. Include history of plants and site.
4. Pack to protect during shipment.
5. Deliver or send quickly.