



BRANCHING OUT

An Integrated Pest Management
NEWSLETTER
for Trees and Shrubs

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Thank You to Our Scouts and Diagnosticians

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

Scouting Report Notations:

(#) Numbers in regular type note plate(s) in
Insects that Feed on Trees and Shrubs (2nd
edition) by W.T. Johnson and H.H. Lyon.

(#) Numbers in italics note plate(s) in *Diseases
of Trees and Shrubs* (2nd edition) by W.A.
Sinclair, H.H. Lyon, and W.T. Johnson.

Scouting Report

Conifers

Baldcypress Leafminer/Webber? (12)—host to few caterpillars, heavy damage was seen on a tree in eastern Long Island likely from either green hemlock needleminer (*Coleotechnites apicitripunctella*) which also feeds on hemlock, or related *C. variella*.

Cooley Spruce Gall Adelgid (49)—galls on Colorado blue spruce still closed with developing nymphs within, Westchester Co.



Cooley spruce gall adelgid nymphs inside gall opened for photo (Hillary Jufer)

Elongate Hemlock Scales (45)—crawlers in Westchester Co.

Seiridium Canker (95)—on juniper and Leyland cypress in Westchester Co.

Spruce Spider Mite (52, 53)—on *Taxus* in Westchester Co.

Broad-leaved Trees and Shrubs

Anthracnoses (50-51)—on maple in Westchester Co. and on sycamore in Monroe Co.

Asian Woolly Hackberry Aphid?—on hackberry in Tompkins Co. ID uncertain but appears to be the recent invader *Shivaphis celti*. More information and photos at https://influentialpoints.com/Gallery/Shivaphis_celti_asian_woolly_hackberry_aphid.htm



Possible Asian woolly hackberry aphids (Elizabeth Lamb)

Beech Conk (157)—possible young *Inonotus hispidus* on beech in Suffolk Co. We'll take another look after it grows for a few more months. The experts consulted didn't believe that it had the look of *Laetiporus sulfureus*, chicken of the woods, because its conks usually start pale white or yellow with maybe a little orange. This one was a very colorful young conk masquerading as orange sherbet. Most often found on red or black oaks, *I. hispidus* also seen on maple, beech, birch, hickory, honeylocust, sweetgum, walnut, mulberry, pepper-tree, willow and buckthorn, rarely on pine and fir. Causes a canker rot, affecting first heartwood and later sapwood and vascular cambium.

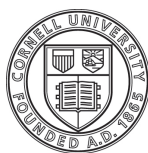


Beech conk (Chris Kempton)

Beech Leaf Disease (BLD)—in Westchester Co. and killing small



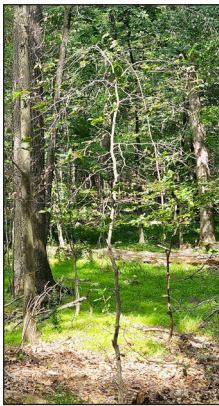
BLD in Maine (Margery Daughtrey)



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

native trees in Rockland Co. Distorted, banded, leathery leaves also noted on Chebeague Is., ME this month—BLD is common in coastal sites.

Young beech trees killed by BLD (Amy Albam)



Black Spot (39)—on rose in Onondaga Co.

Brittle Cinder (102)—gray fungal growth edged with white (*Kretzschmaria deusta*) seen on a red maple with butt rot. Older growth resembling charcoal seen at base of a Norway maple. Both Suffolk Co.



Brittle cinder (top: Rich Gibney, above: Richard Weir)

Currant Aphid—with associated leaf blistering in Monroe Co.

Currant aphid damage (Karen Klingenberg)



Dutch Elm Disease—on landscape tree in Tompkins Co.

Forest Tent Caterpillar (76)—This spring

NYS DEC & others noted FTC-defoliated trees in Catskills & Central NY. DEC is assessing extent of damage; noted outbreaks appear every 10-20 years, ended by natural controls. Unlike cousin eastern tent caterpillar, FTC doesn't make web "nests" and has a generally broader host preference. <https://tinyurl.com/3mn5kphz>



Forest tent caterpillar (Margery Daughtrey)

Hackberry Nipplegall Maker (218J)—psyllid galls under leaves on hackberry in Tompkins Co. Adults resemble

leafhoppers, emerge late summer/fall and overwinter. Hackberry is host to a complex of gall-making psyllids and gall midges.



Hackberry nipplegall maker galls (Elizabeth Lamb)

Hawthorn Rust (130)—*Gymnosporangium globosum*, reported multiple times this year in Suffolk Co.

Honeylocust Plant Bug (194)—damage to honeylocust in Tompkins Co. Scarring and distortion is typical.

Honeylocust plant bug damage (Elizabeth Lamb)



Horsechestnut Leaf Blotch (19)—large irregularly round spots caused by *Guignardia aesculi* seen in Rockland and Monroe Cos.

Horsechestnut leaf blotch (Karen Klingenberg)



Japanese Beetle (110)—on several plants in Westchester, Onondaga and Rockland Cos.

Leopard Moth (119)—on young nursery honeylocust in Suffolk Co. We see occasional attacks on nursery, landscape & apple trees. Older trees usually survive attacks, but damage makes nursery trees unmarketable. Infestations sometimes detected from sap flow and frass/sawdust material



Top: gallery in honeylocust trunk; above: leopard moth trapped on sticky panel, (Dan Gilrein)

pushed from the gallery. Use a stiff wire to kill larvae within.

Linden Spindle (Nail) Galls—eriphyid mites responsible for these galls on lindens, probably



Linden spindle (nail) galls (Hillary Jufer)

Eriophyes tiliae. Three other species are reported to cause nail galls on lindens in Europe. Different species cause erineum (felt) galls on linden.

Marssonina Leaf Blotch (40)—on 'Freedom' apple in Onondaga Co.

Marssonina leaf blotch (Carol Bradford)



"Oriental Grass Root Aphid"—bladder-like leaf galls on elm in Monroe Co.

Pear Trellis Rust—in Rockland Co.

Poison Ivy Leaf Gall Mite—on fragrant sumac in Suffolk Co. and Southeast PA. *Aculops rhois* also produces similar galls on poison ivy and poison oak.



Poison ivy leaf gall mite damage (Mina Vescera)

Potato Leafhopper (199)—on a variety of woody and herbaceous plants (maple, wisteria, walnut, dahlia) showing hopperburn/stunting in Suffolk & Westchester Cos.

Powdery Mildew—on dogwood in Westchester Co. and crape myrtle in Suffolk Co.

Powdery mildew on crape myrtle (Mina Vescera)



Quince Rust (131)—on hawthorn fruit in Westchester Co.

Rose Midge (227)—on roses in Onondaga Co.

Smoketree Rust—fairly new disease to NY, caused by the rust *Pileolaria cotinicoggygiae*, seen in Dutchess Co. last year, reappearing this season across Monroe Co. following a rainy spring. Symptoms most common in the canopy interior and on plants grown in shade. At a distance symptoms might be easily overlooked, so may be underreported rather than rare. This Asian rust was first reported in the US from Arkansas in 1924 and noted in 20 states since 2020, 5 of which are in the Northeast.



Smoke tree rust fungus on leaf undersurfaces (Brian Eshenaur)

Soft Scale—on dogwood, unidentified but possible European fruit lecanium, in Westchester Co.



Unidentified soft scale (Hillary Jufer)

Spotted Lanternfly—4th-instar nymphs (red) now in Westchester, Rockland, Suffolk Cos. 1st adults around late July. NYS Dept of Agriculture & Markets requesting new reports ONLY from Upstate counties; no reports needed from SE NY & Long Island. More & how to report: <https://tinyurl.com/562mmaza>

Tar Spot of Maple (32)—early symptoms, with leaves not yet showing textbook tarry patches, reported in Suffolk, Westchester, Tompkins & Monroe Cos. See *Under the Scope* for closeups.



Tar spot of maple, early symptoms (Carol Bradford)

Verticillium Wilt (120-121)—suspected on maple in Broome Co. and confirmed on smoketree in Suffolk Co.

Volutella Blight—on boxwood in Westchester and Suffolk Cos.

Willow Leaf-miner—mines visible under leaves on corkscrew willow in Suffolk Co. from a fly, *Aulagromyza populi*. European, where it's only on *Populus*; found on willow (mostly *S. babylonica* and hybrids) in Japan and in US (CA 2019, NY City 2020, Long Is. 2022, NJ & PA 2023). Symptoms not very noticeable from above. Thanks to Charley Eiseman for the ID.



Willow leafminer mines (Dan Gilrein)

Under the Scope:

Reports from Diagnostic Labs

Downy Mildew on Rose (175)—This blasted flower head was found to be infected by downy mildew after examination with dissecting and compound microscopes. A period of wet weather preceded the symptoms.



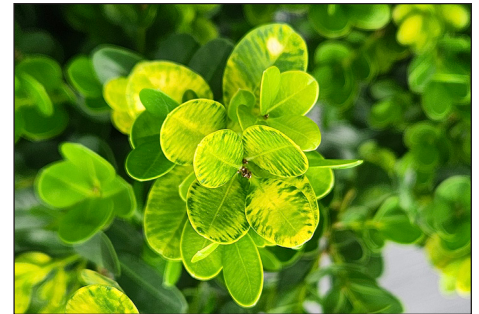
Downy mildew-blasted rose (Margery Daughtrey)

Frogeye Leaf Spot (62)—on Korean Mountain Ash in Tompkins Co and on crabapple in Suffolk Co.



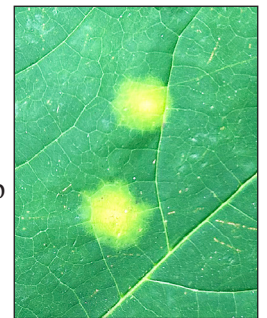
Frogeye leaf spot on crabapple (Margery Daughtrey)

Iron Deficiency on Boxwood (242-243)—photographs of interveinal chlorosis on new growth of boxwood growing at a high pH in an experimental plot were received at Long Is. Horticulture Research & Extension Center. Consultation with Lynn Batdorf, once curator of the National Boxwood Collection, indicated that these were classic symptoms of iron deficiency on boxwood. A foliar analysis would provide further evidence for this conclusion.



Boxwood with iron deficiency (Charles Whitten)

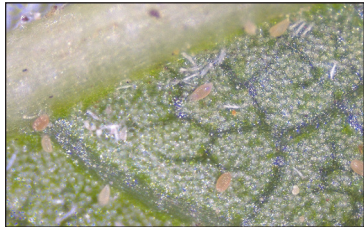
Tar Spot of Maple (32)—early symptoms magnified. Lesions initially yellow and gradually develop black stromata that create the tarry looking spots by fall.



Top: leaf upper surface with yellow lesions (Chris Kempton); above: with black stromata (Elizabeth Lamb)

Vagrants! Some eriophyid mites (e.g., rust mites) are “vagrant,” wandering plant surfaces creating no gall-like structures. Some of these cause little to no noticeable damage, such as those on a recent Suffolk Co. lacebark elm sample. At least two

such species are known from elm, *Rhyncaphytoptus ulmivagrans* (European, also in GA & CA reported from several elms but not *U. parvifolia*) and *R. atlanticus* (American elm, eastern US). Sharp-eyed arborist Pete Boullianne spotted these. We're not certain but suspect this is *R. ulmivagrans*, reported active June-early August with a 2nd different female stage, easily mistaken for a different species, that “hibernates” in twig depressions.



Eriophyid mites (Dan Gilrein)

Miscellany

Fighting Box Tree Moth: Mark Kenis with CABI (Europe) will talk about very promising work and discoveries with USDA-APHIS concerning biocontrol of BTM on Aug. 5 at 1 pm. More info and to register: <https://tinyurl.com/4bmmkfaa>

Phenology by County

Monroe: sweetshrub, panicle hydrangea

Onondaga: golden rain-tree, bottlebrush, trumpet vine

Rockland: Abelia, crape myrtle, mimosa, rose of Sharon

Suffolk: crape myrtle, hydrangea, mimosa, butterfly bush

Tompkins: various hydrangeas, bottlebrush buckeye

Westchester: bigleaf hydrangea, hibiscus, crape myrtle

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

Growing Degree Days

As of July 21, 2026

Station	GDD ₅₀	Station	GDD ₅₀
Albany.....	1506	Ithaca.....	1177
Binghamton.....	1305	New Brunswick,NJ.....	2017
Boston, MA.....	1633	Poughkeepsie.....	1628
Bridgeport, CT.....	1635	Riverhead.....	1741
Buffalo.....	1365	Rochester.....	1422
Central Park.....	1989	Syracuse.....	1484
Farmingdale.....	1700	Watertown.....	1091
Hartford, CT.....	1637	Westchester.....	1648
		Worcester, MA.....	1368

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New Breeding Developments in Woody Plants for New York Landscapes: Insights from a Plant Breeder

Dr. Mark Bridgen, Professor of Horticulture and Plant Breeding, Cornell University

Beyond the Herbaceous

As a breeder of ornamental plants for the past 43 years, it has been exciting to watch the development and introduction of new plants to the green industry. Most of the plants that I have bred over the years have been herbaceous, not woody. Key herbaceous plants that our team has worked on include impatiens for resistance to Impatiens Downy Mildew, *Alstroemeria* (Lily of the Incas) for winter hardiness, the Wishbone Plant, *Torenia*, for new flower colors and insect resistance, and others.

In recent years, we have been breeding the woody plant *Vitex*, sometimes called the Chase Plant. A beautiful late-season blooming, USDA hardiness zone 7-9 shrub that grows best in full sun and is deer resistant. We have a beautiful, new pink-flowered variety and an intensely purple one that we hope to introduce later this year. We also need to name these new plants; finding a catchy and appropriate name for the new cultivars may be the most difficult part. (Suggestions are always welcome!)



Top: purple *Vitex*; above: flowers of pink variety (Mark Bridgen)

How to Breed a Plant 101

The breeding process for new plants begins with the production of seeds from targeted crosses of strong, parent plants. Hybridization creates genetic variation and occurs by cross pollinating these parent plants with desirable traits usually by hand-pollination. This process produces seeds that hopefully grow into plants that exhibit new, superior characteristics. This is how we generate new cultivars. But first, these new plants need to be evaluated and traits need to be identified. Evaluation is best if it involves multi-environment testing. Once the best performers have been identified, they need to be clonally propagated to increase numbers for commercial release.

Plant breeding does not always involve complex genetic manipulation. Much of woody plant improvement still relies on careful observation and selection from large seedling populations. Breeders may evaluate thousands of seedlings before identifying a single plant worthy of introduction. Plants must demonstrate consistent performance across multiple years and environments before they reach the nursery trade.

New Trends, New Needs, New Plants

Nowadays, there are some very common breeding goals and objectives throughout the USA that are driving innovation in woody plant development. The search for winter hardy plants that can tolerate harsh, cold temperatures is very common. For example, the University of Minnesota has done a nice job with its "Lights" series of azaleas.

Ornamental traits that improve flower and leaf colors, flower form, and growth habit are also very common breeding objectives. Some recent examples of new



Encore® Azalea 'Autumn Moonstruck'



Encore® Azalea 'Autumn Moonlight'

ornamental woody plants include Encore® Azalea 'Autumn Moonstruck' as well as 'Autumn Moonlight', both reblooming shrubs with variegated chartreuse-and-emerald foliage and white blooms that are ideal for containers or hedges. Just Chill™ Red Tip Camellia offers burgundy new growth and fragrant pink flowers early in the season. Spruce It Up™ Dwarf White Spruce is a compact, pyramidal conifer suited for small spaces or structured winter gardens.



Just Chill™ Red Tip Camellia (Proven Winners® ColorChoice®)

Another common breeding objective is for “urban tolerance.” This includes breeding for disease resistance, compact size, and resistance to urban stressors like compacted soil and road salt. Then there are miscellaneous objectives such as plants that attract pollinators and plants that grow well in the shade. With climate change a reality, improved heat tolerance is also a more recent breeding objective.

One of the most significant drivers of woody plant breeding has been the need to rebuild tree diversity following devastating pest and disease outbreaks. The loss of native elms during the mid-20th century due to Dutch elm disease fundamentally changed North American streetscapes. Breeding programs responded by developing hybrid elms with improved disease resistance and cold hardiness. A notable example is *Ulmus* 'New Horizon',



Spruce It Up™ Dwarf White Spruce (Plants Nouveau)

which combines genetics from Japanese elm and Siberian elm to create a tree that demonstrates strong resistance to Dutch elm disease and good survival in long-term trials. Similarly, cultivars like *Ulmus* 'Morton Plainsman' have been developed through hybridization programs aimed at restoring the iconic American elm form to urban landscapes while maintaining disease tolerance. For New York municipalities and arborists seeking large canopy trees, these improved elms represent a major step toward rebuilding resilient urban forests.

Winter injury remains a major constraint for woody plants, particularly for species introduced from milder climates. Breeding programs across the northern United States have focused heavily on improving cold tolerance while maintaining ornamental value. Breeding strategies often involve identifying plants within marginally hardy species; plants that survive extreme winters and can be used as parents in future breeding cycles. For example, species such as katsura, Korean maple, and lacebark elm are routinely screened in northern breeding programs for exceptional cold tolerance.

For most plant breeders, aesthetics remains the central objective to woody plant breeding. Landscapers and homeowners still demand plants with striking flowers, attractive bark, and consistent growth habits. Breeding programs increasingly combine ornamental traits with improved adaptability and diversity. Overreliance on a small number of species historically contributed to catastrophic losses when pests or diseases emerged.

For arborists, landscapers, and nursery growers, the palette of woody plants available today is broader and more resilient than it was even two decades ago. Advances in plant breeding, genetics, selection, and evaluation are reshaping how we think about landscape trees and shrubs. Understanding these trends can help industry professionals anticipate what new plants may soon be entering the nursery pipeline.