



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 Klingenberg, Elizabeth Lamb, Jessica O'Callahan, Zaidée 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

Bagworm (80, 81)—on juniper in Rockland Co. but birds are providing natural control; also in Suffolk Co. Larvae will stop feeding shortly and insecticides (like Bt) will be less effective.

Elongate Hemlock Scale (45)—on Canada hemlock; adult females in Westchester Co., all stages in Suffolk Co. See *Under the Scope*.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (32E)—settled crawlers on Canada hemlock in Suffolk Co. A bit difficult to determine if live or dead at this time, should be more apparent as development resumes in cool weather. See *Under the Scope*.

Scale—found at the base of yellowing needles of Japanese umbrella pine. Likely Maskell scale.

Likely Maskell scale (Margery Daughtrey)

Broad-leaved Trees and Shrubs

American Dagger Moth Caterpillar—On hawthorn in Westchester Co., common on many deciduous trees. Rust lesions also present.

Anthracnose (52-54)—on maple, dogwood and birch in Westchester Co.

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Apple Scab (43)—seen on crabapple fruits in Monroe Co.



Apple scab (Karen Klingenberg)

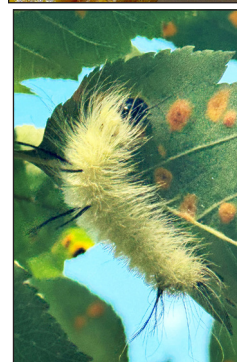
Asian Oak Leaf Beetle—a sample of *Demotina modesta* found on European beech in western Suffolk Co. was submitted mid-July and second from white oak soon after. Reported hosts include oaks and Japanese chinquapin, but not beech. We saw these 1/8" tan/brown beetles, distinguished by a toothed thorax edge, last year damaging European beech and mistook them for the similar native *Xanthonia* beetles. First known US report from northern GA in 1970, it has since spread widely through SE US, NJ and Long Island. All are parthenogenic, so just one female can start a population. We're still learning about what, if any, associated damage there may be, but the beetles occasionally can be numerous.



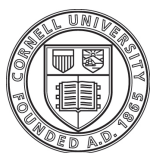
Asian oak leaf beetle (Alice Raimondo)

Beech Leaf Disease—in Westchester and Suffolk Co.

Black Oak Twiggall Wasp (213E,F, misidentified as *C. crypta*)—on a black



American dagger moth caterpillar and rust spots (Hillary Jufer)



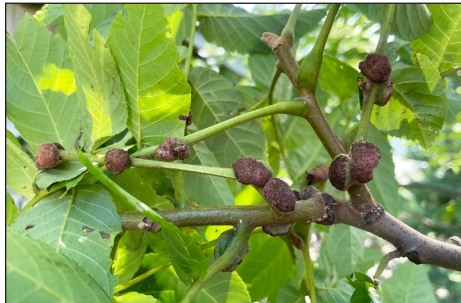
Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

oak initially mistaken for scarlet oak, which doesn't appear to be a host for this insect. Tree died after leafing out this spring; appears to be narrow-leaved variant noted by some authors or possibly a hybrid with scarlet oak. "Gouty" twigs with extensive dieback show 6-7 years' history of heavy gall wasp attack. This species, *Zapatella davisae* (formerly *Bassetia ceropteroides*), has been associated with death of black oaks on LI and eastern MA.



Black oak twig gall wasp damage (Dan Gilrein)

Black Walnut Leaf Petiole Gall (234F,G)—eriophyid mite *Eriophyes caulis* causes strange galls on petioles and shoots of this host in Suffolk Co. These have aged from the bright red color to red-brown.



Black walnut leaf petiole galls (Dan Gilrein)

Cottony Maple Leaf Scale (163)—settled crawlers under leaves of Kousa dogwood in Suffolk Co. Suggest revisiting early fall to verify survival as many often killed by fungus. If needed, dormant-stage oil can be used next spring for overwintered nymphs on twigs.



Spent cottony maple leaf scale egg cases (Dan Gilrein)

Crapemyrtle Bark Scale—several reports from Suffolk Co. and NYC with associated honeydew/sooty mold. Website, <https://stopcmbs.com/> has lots of information on biology and

management with link to a Southern IPM Center survey seeking your experience with CMBS and management.



Crapemyrtle bark scale (Dan Gilrein)

Entomosporium Leaf Spot (38)—blackening of the leaf surface of hawthorn in Tompkins Co. See *Under the Scope* for a view of the unique spores.



Entomosporium leaf spot (Sandra Jensen)

Eriophyid Gall Mites—on oak and maple in Westchester Co. One species on white oak forms erineum (felt) leaf galls that resemble those made by the fungal disease caused by *Taphrina*. Check under galls for felt-like material.

Fall Webworm (75)—on *Prunus* in Monroe Co., maple & birch in Fulton Co.

Fall webworm "nest"
(Karen Klingenberg)



Gall Midge Leaf Galls—likely from gall midge on bitternut hickory in Monroe Co. Three very similar species are reported to create similar galls.

Gall midge leaf galls
(Karen Klingenberg)



Herbicide Injury (235)—white oaks on one Suffolk Co. property were noted with stunted leaves, cupped downward and with a leathery texture. Presumably due to drift of a growth-regulator type herbicide last spring, when leaves of this species

were only partly expanded. Leaves from a second flush were normal size and texture. Leaves should look normal next year if the even is not repeated.



Herbicide injury causing leaf curl (Margery Daughtrey)

Laurel Wilt—back on Long Island this year, alas. The vector has apparently overwintered (redbay ambrosia beetles found this spring in traps set by Bartlett Tree Experts). Wilted and desiccated sassafras seen at several sites in Suffolk Co. Recently, isolations from a wilted spicebush near diseased sassafras yielded colonies resembling the pathogen, *Harringtonia lauricola*. Confirmation using PCR testing will be done in Ithaca.



Top: dark sapwood streaking indicating laurel wilt on sassafras. **NOTE:** don't cut too deeply and miss the black streaking found just beneath the bark as indicated by red arrow; above: wilting spicebush near wilting sassafras; next page, top: vascular discoloration and "toothpicks" of an ambrosia beetle noted in spicebush (Yuriy Litvinenko)



Lilac Leaf Blight—this summer, disease caused by the fungus *Pseudocercospora* was noted on white- and purple-flowered lilacs. Leaf spotting led to massive defoliation. White-flowered common lilacs were worse hit than purple at this site (Suffolk Co.). Avoid overhead watering and gather leaf debris in autumn to reduce overwintering. Time fungicides in response to the first tiny leaf spots; once leaves are blighted there is little point in spraying. See *Under the Scope* for a spore view.



Lilac leaf blight (Margery Daughtrey)

Pear Trellis Rust—on pear in Westchester Co.

Powdery Mildew (3-6)—on dogwood and sycamore in Westchester Co. and winterberry holly in Hamilton Co.

Slime Mold—on English ivy in Monroe Co.



Slime mold (Noelle Nagel)

Spotted Lanternfly—adults in Queens Co.; 4th instar and adults in Westchester, Suffolk, Columbia Cos. Lots of honeydew on *Ailanthus* foliage in Columbia Co.

Tar Spot (32)—on maple in Westchester Co.

Twospotted Spider Mite—on magnolia in Westchester Co.



Twospotted spider mite (Hillary Jufer)

Volutella Blight—on boxwood in Westchester Co.

Whiteflies—on various landscape plants. We had a recent report of these massing on forsythia in Suffolk Co. They were apparently originating from *Ilex* growing nearby and suspect these are a species relatively new to the US, *Crenidorsum* (possible *C. micheliae* or *C. turpiniae*, the taxonomist isn't sure) first seen here in 2023. We've now had reports of whiteflies on Japanese holly from Westchester, Manhattan, and Nassau as well. Over a decade ago a different species, *Aleuroclava similis*, was appearing in high numbers on some Japanese hollies but only in June and has since disappeared.



Whiteflies on forsythia (Chris Kempton)

Under the Scope:

Reports from Diagnostic Labs

Elongate Hemlock Scale (45) adult and nymphs with **Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (32E)** summer nymphs. EHS also can generate a fair bit of wispy cottony material but that made by HWA (egg masses) is concentrated in leaf axils.



Top: elongate hemlock scale adult and nymphs; above: hemlock woolly adelgid nymphs (Dan Gilrein)

Entomosporium Leaf Spot (38)—on hawthorn. Leaf blackening symptoms shown in the *Scouting* section were confirmed as *Entomosporium* leaf spot by viewing the spores at the Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic.



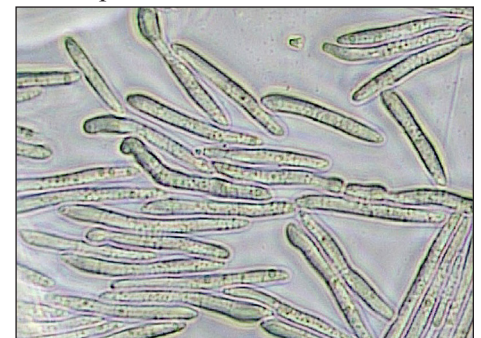
Entomosporium leaf spot spores (Sandra Jensen)

Honeylocust "Seed Weevil"—In Issue 1 we noted 1/8" dia. holes in honeylocust pods from a Suffolk Co. landscape and have confirmed they're from the native *Amblycerus robiniae* (despite the Latin name, black locust is not a host), not the invasive *Megabruchidius* sp. that also feeds on seeds. The weevil adults were out and numerous in May and early June.



Honeylocust "seed weevils" (Dan Gilrein)

Lilac Leaf Blight—close examination of the undersurface of a leaf lesion of a blighted lilac with hand lens or dissecting scope will show blobs or tendrils of white spores.



Lilac leaf blight spores (Margery Daughtrey)

Longhorned Ticks—becoming more common around NY; preferred hosts include domestic and some wild animals, humans much less so. Not a known vector of human pathogens in US yet. Parthenogenic, so only one female can start a population. Mouthparts much shorter than lone star's, overall

appearance different from blacklegged (deer) and American dog ticks. *Longhorned tick (Dan Gilrein)*



Miscellany

Laurel Wilt. DEC led a tour for federal, state and county agencies on August 5, providing opportunities to see symptoms in the field. Live redbay ambrosia beetles (*Xyleborus glabratus*) have been collected in traps this spring by Bartlett Tree Experts. This means that we can anticipate an ever-widening zone of symptomatic sassafras and possibly spicebush in 2026. Samples of wilting sassafras and spicebush have recently been submitted for diagnosis from parkland in northwestern Suffolk Co. and of spicebush from a nursery on the East End of Long Island; confirmation of both cases by PCR testing is in progress. Upstate, declining spicebush from various parks have been submitted with testing finding no evidence of the laurel wilt pathogen, only an abundance of insect feeding damage. The western Suffolk find, if confirmed, would be the first detection of laurel wilt on spicebush in New York.

Phenology by County

Monroe: Japanese pagoda tree, bottlebrush buckeye, seven-son flower

Rockland: chaste tree, panicle hydrangea

Suffolk: Butterfly bush, various crapemyrtle, chaste tree, panicle hydrangea 'Limelight,' Japanese pagoda tree

Westchester: rose of Sharon, butterfly bush, beauty bush

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

Growing Degree Days

As of August 18, 2026

Station	GDD ₅₀	Station	GDD ₅₀
Albany.....	2131	Ithaca.....	1753
Binghamton.....	1859	New Brunswick,NJ.....	2746
Boston, MA.....	2332	Poughkeepsie.....	2278
Bridgeport, CT.....	2342	Riverhead.....	2353
Buffalo.....	1983	Rochester.....	2023
Central Park.....	2736	Syracuse.....	2123
Farmingdale.....	2402	Watertown.....	1632
Hartford, CT.....	2294	Westchester.....	2303
		Worcester, MA.....	1962

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- Edward Wade / Wade Tree Care, Inc.
- Mount Pleasant Cemetery



Creating Habitat: A New - and Growing! - Approach to Landscape Care and Management

Mhairi McFarlane, PhD, Habitat Stewardship Manager, Cornell Lab of Ornithology (photos courtesy of the author and Macaulay Library)

Introduction

As I wander through my native-plant dominated garden, I take enormous pleasure in every little “chomp” and blemish I see on leaves. Similarly, when out visiting forested natural areas, the most interesting trees are always those which look like they have experienced some sort of “event” - the bent ones, the ones with the split trunks or the lower branches pinned under a fallen neighbor, creating interesting shapes and shouting their resilience to all who listen.

These blemishes and features are things which many have been led to believe are “damage” to be remedied, are in fact signs that the plants are part of an actual ecosystem. Leaves which show signs of insect damage are likely to be supporting important bird food: caterpillars which are essential to support another cohort of hungry nestlings across many species.



Song Sparrow with insect larvae to feed hungry nestlings

Changing the Old Approach

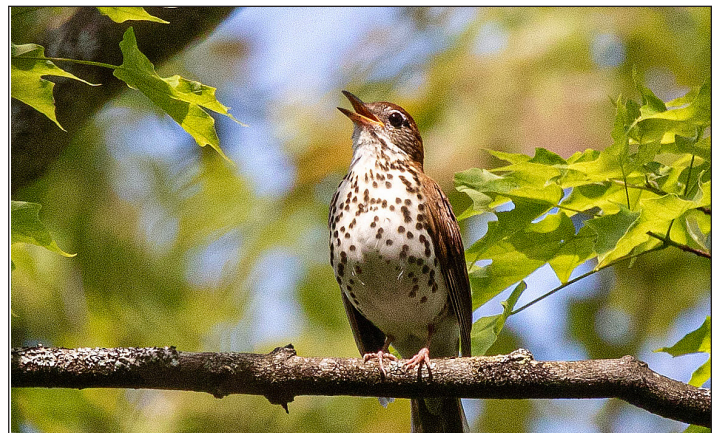
There is a common mindset among some who manage and care for landscapes that signs of animal damage on their plants are bad, and that intervention is required if such an affront is detected. Until recently, the typical “western” perception of the garden is that it is a piece of décor, a display, an extension of an orderly house. Nibbled leaves, crooked stems, and any plants which did not conform to this artificial perception of “beauty” were a problem to be conquered. The first discolored petal condemned the flower to the chop, in the hopes of encouraging more flowers to be produced. Trees and shrubs grown ornamentally are subject to a similar treatment. A young tree bent over by the weight of winter snow, or extensively “pruned” by a wind event or an ice-storm is often labelled as “dead” and slated for removal, despite the flush of green leaves clearly indicating

otherwise - a carry-over from practical and economic drivers stemming from a need to maximize yield of long, straight timbers.

This mindset also dictated the plant species encouraged for landscapes and gardens. Plants were brought from other continents, prized or in some cases bred to “enhance” their ornamental appearance, their “well-behaved” growth form and, importantly, their leaves which are unpalatable to the insects in their new homes, rendering them immune to those chomps and blemishes typical of native plants. Such gardens no longer supported an ecosystem: no more caterpillar chomps, and bird song gradually faded away as birds tried to find more profitable foraging areas elsewhere to nest.

A New Vision

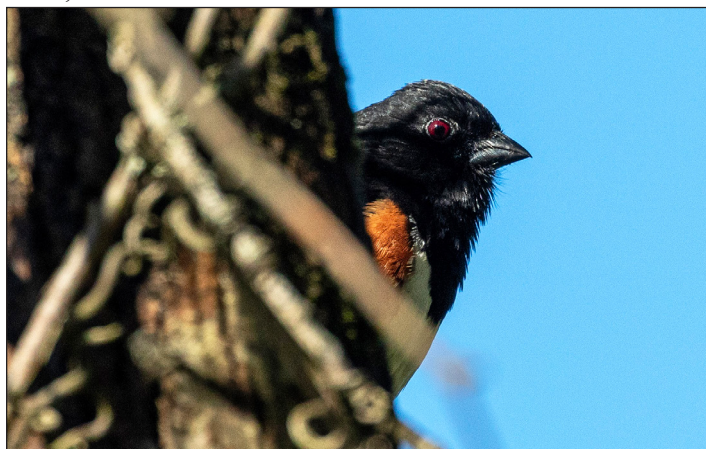
Thankfully, with the increasing awareness of the essential role of native plants in ecosystems, and the rise of the concept of landscaping being not just for us but for wildlife as well, these perceptions are evolving. However, there is still a long way to go before more people truly embrace those bite marks in leaves, dead stems and faded flowers. Selecting plants native to your area for your outdoor space, whether it is a plant in a container or an entire landscape packed with different species, will allow you to support an actual ecosystem. Yes, some of the leaves will sport some holes and scalloped edges, but you will be rewarded by knowing you are providing a high-end restaurant supporting many hard working bird parents.



Wood Thrush appreciate forest habitat packed with native plants which support insect food for adults and young

It doesn't stop with the plant species we choose to grow. No matter the type of landscape, the urge to tidy can be strong. Each spring and fall, over-managing with rakes,

blowers and mowers leads to the annihilation of countless invertebrates that are the backbone of our ecosystems. Finding ways to appreciate the beauty of the patterns created by nibbling caterpillars, busy leafminers, and to appreciate the life supported by letting those native flowers mature and set seed, is important. And those deformed, bent-over trees and shrubs? Novel nest and roost sites for birds, and future cavities for so much life.



Eastern Towhees forage with their feet, kicking up tasty invertebrates which have overwintered in the protective cover of leaf litter

Treating our landscapes as dynamic life-support systems brings so much opportunity for our own happiness, satisfaction and learning. Embracing those caterpillar chomps helps us see the role we can play in supporting wildlife via our plant choices and our plant management decisions. Uneaten leaves start to look unappealing and arouse suspicion as to whether that plant is really contributing to the ecosystem. Straight, single-stemmed and manicured shrubs and trees demonstrate little “character” compared to their wild, weather-beaten colleagues. Tidy landscapes provide little visual interest over long, bleak winters compared with those with a few interesting seedheads and drifts of leaves left to linger.

In spring (and fall), delay your clean-up – ideally indefinitely in at least some parts of the outdoor spaces you tend. Watch carefully and you may be rewarded by having the opportunity to watch Fox Sparrows and Eastern Towhees kicking through leaf litter looking for food to fuel their long migrations. Leave debris even longer into spring and perhaps you’ll spot orioles stripping fibers from flower stems to weave their intricate nests; the first



Foxglove seed heads provide not only winter interest, but food for birds.



Hold off on fall/winter clean up and the birds, like this Black-capped Chickadee, will thank you.

time I saw a Baltimore Oriole on the ground, stripping a goldenrod stem, I committed to my inner laziness and I always leave the stems! Perhaps too, your “wild” spots will put on a lightshow on warm June and July evenings in the form of dozens of fireflies, grateful to have been able to emerge from the protection of those “dead” stems and leaves.



Another species which loves it when you leave the leaves! Fox sparrows appreciate sheltered places to forage to fuel their long migrations to and from their Boreal breeding grounds.

To learn more, sign up for Garden for Birds at Gardenforbirds.org for tips and tricks to make your outdoor space more bird-friendly all season long.

LEARN MORE:
[gardenforbirds.org](https://Gardenforbirds.org)

