DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

Sherrie Smith
Rick Cartwright

SPDN
Southern Plant Diagnostic Network
Issue 9-April 16, 2010

Arkansas Plant Health Clinic Newsletter

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Peony

Peonies are one of our most reliable perennials. They are exceptionally long-lived, reaching ages of 50 years or more. Peonies are also very healthy when planted with a minimum of 6 hours of sun in good garden soil with excellent drainage. However, locations with poor drainage may cause serious disease. Wet, cold springs, coupled with unfavorable growing conditions, can create an ideal environment for Phytophthora blight caused by *Phytophthora cactorum*. Symptoms are dark brown or black, leathery cankers or lesions on shoots, petioles, and leaves. The crown and roots may also be infected, causing a wet rot to develop and kill the entire plant. Infections generally occur in the roots and lower portions of the stem, making treatment with fungicides ineffective. Confirmed cases should be removed and destroyed, together with adjacent soil. Improving drainage and replacing the soil in that location will usually fix the problem. At that point, healthy new peonies can be re-planted.

Garden Peony

Photo by Kenneth M. Gale, Bugwood.org

Peony Phytophthora Blight- *Phytophthora cactorum*

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

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Peony Phytophthora Blight-
Phytophthora cactorum

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Asparagus

Infestations of the Common Asparagus beetle, *Crioceris asparagi,* or the Spotted Asparagus beetle, *Crioceris duodecimpunctata,* can cause serious injury to asparagus crops. Both the larvae and adults feed on the tender growing tips of newly sprouted asparagus. Overwintered adults emerge in the spring and begin feeding, causing a brown discoloration of the tissue. Eggs are laid by adults singly or in rows of two to eight. They hatch in seven to twelve days, and the grubs begin feeding on the tender tips and foliage, and in the case of the Spotted Asparagus beetle, the berries. The larvae are yellowish orange with black legs and head. Shoots with eggs should be cut just below ground level and removed. Gathering and destroying the berries will help control the Spotted Asparagus beetle. Insecticides containing permethrins, or carbaryl (Sevin), or Malathion give chemical control.

Common Asparagus beetle-
Crioceris asparagi

Photo by Clemson University - USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series, Bugwood.org

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Asparagus Beetle Eggs-*Crioceris asparagi*

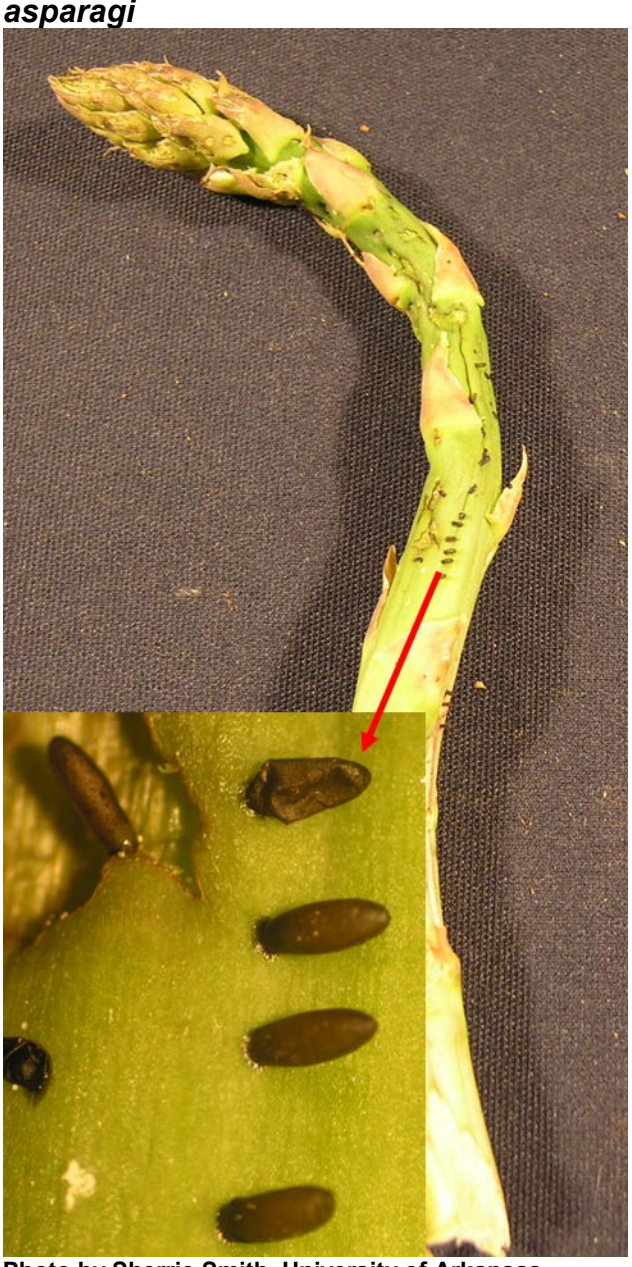

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Spotted Asparagus Beetle-*Crioceris duodecimpunctata*

Photo by Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

Asparagus Beetle Larva-*Crioceris asparagi*

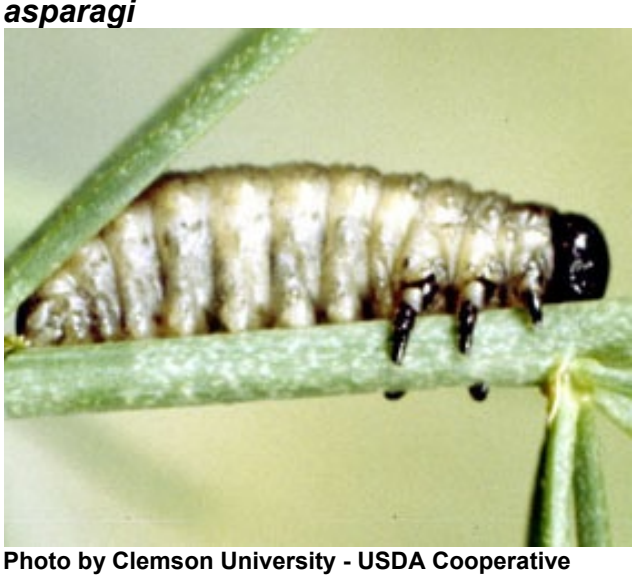

Photo by Clemson University - USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series1, Bugwood.org.

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Pine

Species of *Coleosporium* cause rust diseases of 2 and 3 needle pines. Susceptible pine species include Jack, Red, Scotts, Lodge pole, Loblolly, and Austrian pines. *Coleosporium* requires two botanically unrelated host plants to complete its life cycle. Therefore, *Coleosporium* rusts are commonly called Pine-aster rust or Pine-goldenrod rust, referring to the alternate host. Morning glory has also been implicated as an alternate host. *Coleosporium* rust generally does not kill trees, except for seedlings. Usually, only trees less than 8-10 feet tall are affected. Heavily infected older needles are cast prematurely, resulting in reduced growth, lowered food production, and reduced value in Christmas tree plantations. Alternate hosts found within 1000 feet of valuable plantations should be destroyed. Although fungicides are not usually necessary, they may be called for to protect vulnerable young trees.

Pine Coleosporium Rust-
Coleosporium asterum

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Pine Coleosporium Rust-
Coleosporium asterum

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

This bulletin from the Cooperative Extension Plant Health Clinic (Plant Disease Clinic) is an electronic update about diseases and other problems observed in our lab each month. Input from everybody interested in plants is welcome and appreciated.

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