Sherrie Smith
Keiddy Urrea

Issue 20-July 13, 2021

Arkansas Plant Health Clinic Newsletter

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Squash

It is too late now for control of Squash vine borer in summer squash. Control measures should have been started as soon as vines began to run in spring and early summer. If you keep an eye out for the adults at that time of year, you will often see them flying through the vegetable garden in the spring looking for suitable host plants. The borers are the larvae of a clearwing moth, *Melittia satyriniformis*, which emerges from the soil in the spring and lays eggs singly on the undersides of squash and pumpkin vines, usually at the base of the plant. When the larvae hatch, they burrow into the stem and start feeding. This causes the eventual collapse and death of the vine. Growers don't notice anything wrong until the vine starts wilting. Large white worms with brown heads can be seen if stems are cut open. You can sometimes find the larvae in the squash fruit as well. Mature larvae eventually exit the plants, burrow into the soil where they pupate until the following spring. Products containing bifenthrin, or Malathion applied as sprays or dusts are effective. Continue a 7–10-day reapplication schedule for 3 to 5 weeks.

Squash Vine Borer in Fruit- *Melittia satyriniformis*

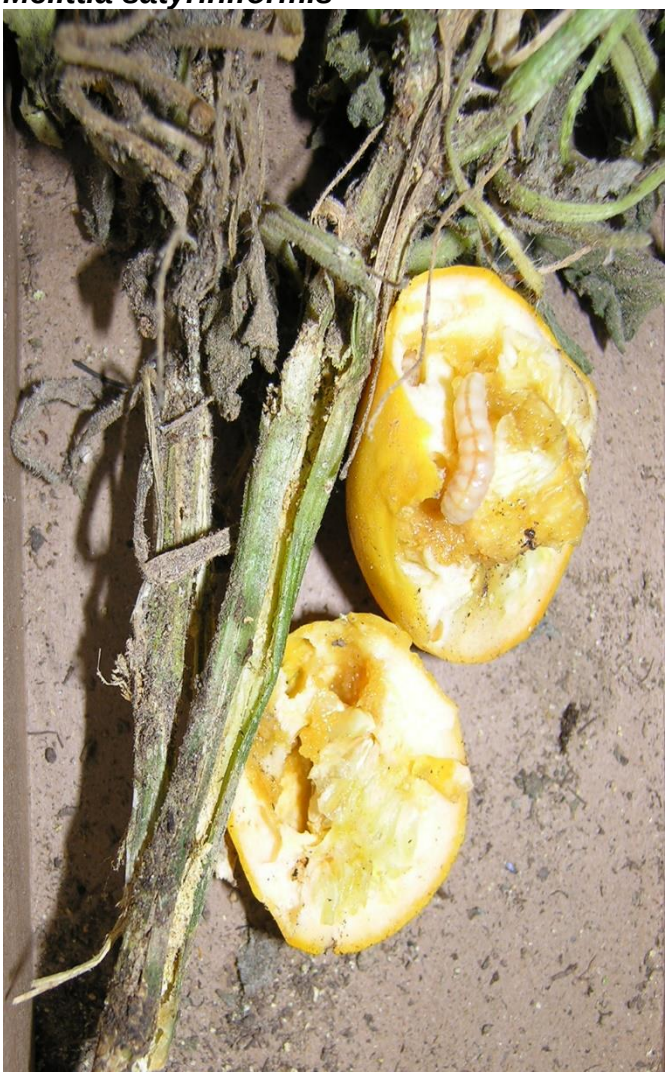

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

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Squash Vine Borer in Stem-
Melittia satyriniformis

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Birch Leaf Spot

Homeowners are often frightened by the sudden defoliation of their birch tree in mid to late summer. Birch Leaf Spot or blight, caused by *Cryptocline betularum,* can cause severe premature leaf shed. Up to 30% or more of the tree's leaves may end up on the ground. Fortunately, this occurs late enough in the season that tree health is not much affected. Control consists of cleanup of the fallen leaves, and good care of the tree including proper fertilization and water. If repeated severe defoliations occur, fungicides containing chlorothalonil may be used at bud break in the spring and continues at two intervals for 2 or 3 applications. This is generally not necessary unless the tree is very young and vulnerable.

Birch Leaf Spot-*Cryptocline betularum*

Photo by Cody Stroud, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Sherrie Smith
Keiddy Urrea

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Birch Leaf Spot-*Cryptocline betularum*

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Birch Leaf Spot Spores-*Cryptocline betularum*

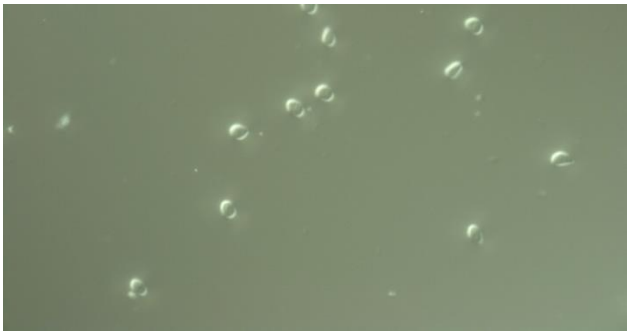

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Birch Spiny Witch-hazel Gall

Although alarming to homeowners, Spiny witch-hazel gall aphids *Hamamelistes spinosus,* do no serious harm to healthy trees. The first symptoms are birch leaves with distorted corrugations or bumpy ridges. Infested leaves turn brown and fall from the tree. However, control is not usually warranted because healthy trees produce a new crop of leaves to replace those destroyed by the aphids. The life cycle of this interesting aphid takes two full years to complete. Eggs are laid on witch-hazel in June and July. The eggs hatch in the spring and the nymphs feed on the flower buds. The feeding activity causes a spiny gall to form on the affected witch-hazel. Winged aphids develop inside the spiny galls, then leave and fly to birch. This generation gives birth to a scale-like generation, which hibernates on birch until the following spring. At bud break the scale-like aphids feed on the new leaves, causing them to form corrugated galls. When the aphids mature into winged adults, they migrate back to witch-hazel.

Birch Spiny Witch-hazel Gall Aphids-*Hamamelistes spinosus*

Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Sherrie Smith
Keiddy Urrea

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Birch Spiny Witch-hazel Gall Aphids-*Hamamelistes spinosus*

Photo by Colin Massey, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Birch Spiny Witch-hazel Gall-*Hamamelistes spinosus*

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.

"This work is supported by the Crop Protection and Pest Management Program [grant no. 2017-70006-27279/project accession no. 1013890] from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture."