

!! Heads Up!



August 2015

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It's August. It's hot and you're wondering...will I see any plants that are something other than being stressed out by the sun? The answer is, absolutely! There are lots of things that cause plant problems besides old sol. But certainly the sun can contribute its share.

In previous Augusts, the Diagnostic Lab saw about 20% of its specimens having cultural issues (including scorch, drought, wrong plant-wrong place, etc.); 25% fungal issues and 22% insect issues. Our work also included roughly 15% plant identifications and 6% insect identifications.

In the last three Augusts, MG clinics north of the ship canal have contributed the most specimens to the Diagnostic Lab. (This also includes the Miller Library at CUH which isn't actually a MG clinic). Clinics south of the ship canal are right behind with the Eastside bringing up the rear. Altogether, 204 samples were submitted in

the past three Augusts. So, with data from previous years in mind let's take a look at what you might be seeing this August in your clinics. All the links and most of the the pictures used here are from the [WSU Hortsense](#), the [PNW Plant Disease](#) and the [PNW Insect Management](#) Handbooks websites.

CROCOSMIA:

You Plant It and They Will Come!

The hummingbird-loving, garden-punctuating Crocosmia is destined to attract [spider mites](#) and [thrips](#). These insects thrive in hot dry late summer conditions. If your clients see little gray dots on the spiky leaves (stippling), a periodic blast of water will keep the infestation at bay. Be sure to clean up what is on the ground.

DAHLIA

[Fungal Root Rot](#)

The fungus Fusarium can attack dahlia roots and rots them thus compromising the stem. The key

to management is to avoid overwatering and to provide good drainage. Once the pathogen is in the soil, you will not want your client to plant another dahlia there. The Dahlia is named after Anders Dahl so it's pronounced: DOLL-YA

HYDRANGEA

[Leaf Scorch](#)



If the extreme heat of June and July continues into August, you will see more wilting, leaf drop and scorch on many shrubs . . . including Hydrangea. If this has happened before to a particular plant, it could be planted in the wrong place, and might benefit from being moved to a more appropriate location this fall. Plants located appropriately save precious water.

MOUNTAIN ASH

(SORBUS, ssp.)

[Sawfly](#)

Just when you thought that Mountain Ash was the perfect, colorful tree for the garden

sawflies came along and spoiled the thought. While much of the damage was done in the spring, you may not see it until a second round of larva hatches this month. Leaves can be completely skeletonized almost overnight!



CANKERS, CONKS AND GALLS

Do you know the difference between the three?

[Cankers](#) are wounds that often show up as *depressions* on branches and stems. You must determine what causes the canker to resolve the problem. We most often see cankers caused by fungi and by the effects of fluctuating winter temperatures.

[Conks](#) are the fruiting structures of fungi. If you look at a tree (often a conifer) and see parasitic, mushroom-like *structures* on the trunk or limbs, you've met a conk. The conk suggests a decaying plant.

[Galls](#) are fascinating phenomena because they can be caused by so many different entities (stress, bacteria, fungi, insects etc.) If your client is seeing an abnormal *swelling* on leaves, stems, trunks or roots, you should advise to remove it. That being said, sometimes plants carry on for years with "lumps" that become "growths."

HAZEL
Eastern Filbert Blight

A MG asked ;jHeads Up! what was killing her Harry Lauder's Walking Stick. The single major problem we see in the Lab with *Corylus* spp. is Eastern Filbert Blight. It is a very recognizable fungal problem which causes small dark cankers in nice tidy rows on stems and branches.



If your client has a Harry Lauder's Walking Stick (*Corylus Avellana Contorta*) it is more than susceptible. Prune out branches with cankers, and while you are pruning for cankers look for Lecanium scale which appear as little "chocolate drops". They are insects that suck the plant's juices and can stress a plant greatly.

GRAPE
Brown Marmorated Stink Bug
Erineum Mite

We introduced the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug in the last edition of ;j Heads Up! It is making quite a reputation for itself attacking many different kinds of plants and fruits. Grapes have their own share of problems growing here due to the vagaries of the weather west of the Cascades. The BMSB just makes things more difficult.



If a client presents you with "lumpy" leaves from a grape, look on the underside for white to brown patches. This is where the microscopic erineum mite is making its home. Blisters (dimples) on the top of the leaf will appear green. This is a common problem with grape and not difficult to diagnose.



CEDAR Flagging

So, your client looks up at their cedar tree that has been in the garden for many years. It's a stately tree that has provided beauty and shade for decades. But this year, in particular, there are indications on the outer branches of browning twigs.

Stay calm. This is called Cedar flagging and is normal. Large conifers endure a lot of stress in our Mediterranean-like summer due to lack of water and from hot winds. Older foliage dies and falls leaving the green new growth. No need for panic.



It's OK to water an established tree during prolonged periods of dryness.

What do: adder, lung, bane, barren, bear, bell, birth, bishop, bitter, bladder, blood, bog, bride, brother, bull, *ad. nauseam* have in common?

They're all "worts!" And most worts are nice except maybe the 'warts' that *grow* on you!

But there's one wort you'll want to remove from a shade garden and that's: Liverwort.



Liverworts are prostrate moss-like growths that thrive in damp, shady, compacted soils. They spread by spores. They can rob the soil of air and water by creating a barrier on the soil surface. Scrape off the Liverwort and loosen the soil.

NOTE: We've omitted some of the "usual suspects" in this edition of ;jHeads Up! Be alert to problems with apples, pears, plums, dogwoods, laurels, rhododendrons, maples, roses, tomatoes. Check past editions.