Brown Coloration on Junipers

Certain eastern redcedar and various other junipers are showing a brownish cast when viewed from a distance. This may be the male flowers. Male flowers are on the tips of the leaves and look somewhat like a cross between a miniature hand grenade and a pinecone. Shaking the branches on dry days often results in a cloud of pollen being released.

Most junipers are dioecious, meaning they have both male and female plants. About half the junipers (the males) will have this coloration. The female flowers are much less obvious. If you have clients who are concerned about this brown coloration, have them check plants to ensure male flowers are the cause. If they are, assure them that this is normal and will fade with time. (WU)

FLOWERS

Zinnia Cultivars for Butterfly Attraction

Would you like to increase the number and type of butterfly visits to your garden this year? A recent study in the Journal of Environmental Horticulture (Yeargan and Colvin, 2009) evaluated four cultivars of zinnia for butterfly feeding preferences. The four widely available cultivars were Zinnia violacea (formerly Zinnia elegans) 'Lilliput', 'Oklahoma', 'State Fair', and Zinnia marylandica 'Pinwheel' (all mixed colors). Butterfly visits were counted both in the morning and afternoon for
seven weeks in August and September (in Kentucky). Thirty different species of butterflies were identified as Zinnia visitors. Twice as many total butterflies visited 'Lilliput' than any of the other cultivars. Also, a greater number of butterfly species visited 'Lilliput' than visited other cultivars. Zinnia violacea 'Lilliput' is a truly heirloom zinnia cultivar, having been developed in the 1870s, but fortunately it remains readily available today at local stores and through Internet seed sales. This cultivar should be an excellent addition to any butterfly garden. (CB)

**Planting Easter Lilies Outside**

![Easter Lily](image)

Gardeners often hate to throw out Easter Lilies after they finish blooming and may wonder if they can grow outside. Though not reliably hardy in Kansas, many gardeners have success if they follow a few simple rules.

1. After the flowers have faded, remove the flower stalk so that energy does not go into making seed.

2. Keep the plant inside until the danger of frost is past. Keep soil moist but never waterlogged. Don’t allow water to sit in the tray. Continue to fertilize.

3. The pot can be moved outside when frost is no longer a concern. Sinking the pot into the soil up to the brim and placing in dappled shade will help reduce watering. Continue to water and fertilize until the top growth dies down.

4. Choose a sunny, well-drained spot for planting. Good drainage is vital for lilies, so the addition of organic matter is usually necessary for most soils. Till or dig the soil 6 inches deep and add 3 inches of peat moss. Mix the soil and peat moss together. This will form a berm that should drain very well.

5. Plant the bulbs 6 inches deep and 12 to 18 inches apart and water in well. Mulch to conserve moisture. New growth may appear later in the summer, or the plant may stay dormant until the following spring.

6. Cover the plants in the fall after the foliage has died down with straw, pine needles, wood chips or other types of mulch to help protect the plant over winter. Use 4 inches of straw or 3 inches of any of the other materials.

7. Uncover the plants in the spring to allow new growth to appear, and fertilize according to soil test. (WU)
FRUIT

Cedar-Apple Rust Active

Many people in southern Kansas have noticed the large, bright orange, jelly-like, tendril covered balls on the cedar trees since the rains started last week. These cedar-apple rust galls release millions of spores that can infect apples and crabapples with the rust disease. There is a related disease named cedar-quince rust that infects hawthorn trees. Unprotected, susceptible apples, crabapples and hawthorns are likely infected. Though not yet visible, we can’t cure what is already there. But many of the newer crabapples are naturally resistant.

Though they may show signs of the disease, they won’t defoliate like susceptible varieties. Even susceptible varieties that defoliate will throw out a new set of leaves if they were healthy before infection. Significant damage to crabapples is rare. But fruiting apples pour a great deal of energy into the fruit and may be stressed more severely. It will be important to pamper them this summer by keeping them watered. It is also recommended to prevent further infections by applying fungicides through Memorial Day. Several fungicides, including Banner, Systhane, Rubigan, Funginex and Bayleton, applied on a 14- to 21- day interval are very effective in controlling rust.

However, most of these products are only available to commercial applicators. Homeowners may use triadimefon (Green Light Fung Away), propiconazole (Fertilome Liquid Systemic Fungicide) or myclobutanil sold as Immunox (same active ingredient as Systhane). Chlorothalonil is also labeled for rust, but it is not as effective as the other products listed and cannot be used on apples. Only myclobutanil can be used on fruiting apples. Fungicide applications to the leaves of hawthorn, apple and crabapple must continue as long as cedar galls remain active (jelly-like). If you don't want to mess with fungicide applications, use flowering crabapple or apple varieties that are resistant and avoid the use of any hawthorns in areas where cedar-quince rust has been a problem. (WU)

Fertilizing the Home Orchard

Fruit trees benefit from fertilization around the bloom period. However, the amount needed varies with the age of the tree. Normally, trees need primarily nitrogen, and so the recommendations are for a high nitrogen fertilizer such as a 27-3-3, 29-5-4, 30-3-3 or something similar. Though recommended for lawns, these fertilizers will also work well for our purposes as long as they do not contain weed killers or crabgrass preventers. Use the following rates:
Trees 1 to 2 years old, apply one-fourth cup of fertilizer per tree;
Trees 3 to 4 years old, apply one-half cup per tree;
Trees 5 to 10 years old, apply 1 to 2 cups per tree;
Trees more than 10 years old, apply 2 to 3 cups.

You may also use nitrate of soda (16-0-0) but double the rate recommended above. If a soil test calls for phosphorus and potassium, use a 10-10-10 but triple the rate.

On apple trees, last year’s growth should be 8 to 10 inches, cherries should have 10 to 12 inches and peaches should equal 12 to 15 inches of terminal growth. If less than this, apply the higher rate of fertilizer, and if more, apply the lesser amount.

Spread all fertilizer evenly on the ground away from the trunk of the tree and to the outer spread of the branches. Water in the fertilizer. (WU)

**TURFGRASS**

**Keep Mower Blades Sharp**

Lawn-mowing season is here. Remember that dull blades give the lawn a whitish cast. A dull blade does not cut cleanly but rather shreds the ends of the leaf blades. The shredded ends dry out, giving the lawn that whitish look. A sharp mower blade is even more important when the turf starts putting up seed heads in a month or so. The seed head stems are much tougher than the grass blades and, therefore, more likely to shred. Under normal use, mower blades should be sharpened about every 10 hours of use. (WU)

**PESTS**

**Clover Mites**

Though clover mites are large by mite standards, they are still smaller than a pinhead. Because they are so small, they can easily invade homes through tiny openings around windows and doors. Though tiny, clover mites are very noticeable due to their bright red color. They are also easily identified by their long front legs, which are about twice as long as the other legs.
Clover mites do not bite people (they are plant feeders) or directly damage home furnishings but can leave unsightly stains on curtains, walls, carpets and other structures if they are crushed.

Mites can be removed from inside the home with a vacuum cleaner. Bags should be removed and sealed after use to prevent mites from escaping.

It can also be helpful to try to prevent clover mites from entering the home through the use of physical barriers and miticides. Mites do not readily cross loose, clean, cultivated soil, so a band about 18 to 24 inches wide all around the house, kept free of grass, will help deter potential invaders. Also, clover mites are so small that applying talcum powder, diatomaceous earth, corn starch or baking soda around entry points can stop clover mites by creating a barrier. Even double sticky tape placed on windowsills will catch the small mites when they try to pass. Replace the tape when it fills. Do not crush clover mites as they will leave a rusty stain. Homeowners can also keep mites from entering the home by spraying the outside walls and border areas of the lawn and cultivated soil with effective miticides next to the foundation. Try to treat when daytime temperatures will be at least 60 degrees F because the effectiveness of miticides is greatly reduced by cooler temperatures. Spray outside walls and foundations with lambda-cyhalothrin (Spectracide Triazicide, Scimitar) or bifenthrin (Ortho Home Defense Indoor & Outdoor Insect Killer, Talstar). The house should be sprayed from the lower windowsill down to the ground. Pay particular attention to cracks and crevices in clapboards, shingles, foundation and around basement windows. Be sure to spray up and into the area between the bottom of the house siding and the foundation. (WU) Photo courtesy of Rayanne Lehman, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bugwood.

**Termites or Ants**

Both termites and ants are able to swarm and may have wings during part of their lives. Since these insects are close to the same size, people often misidentify flying ants as termites. Because flying ants do not attack dry wooden structures like termites, it is helpful to be able to tell the difference.

Fortunately, there are several differences that can easily distinguish between the two. For example, ants have a thin waist; the waist of a termite is thick. Also, ants’ antennae are bowed,
while termites’ are straight. Thirdly, termites have two pairs of wings that are of equal length. Ants also have two pairs of wings, but theirs are of unequal length. Homeowners who find signs of termite activity should shop for a reputable pest control firm. (WU)

Nantucket Pine Tip Moth Spray Window Approaching

Peak flight is either here or will be soon on Nantucket Pine Tip Moth (NPTM).

The weather here has been 3 weeks behind normal (apricot just bloomed last week) so I thought that tip moth would be delayed too. But with 80 degree weather they are actually 3 weeks ahead of schedule on emergence compared to last year here in the Wichita area

Willy Goevert of 4C Christmastree Farm has been monitoring NPTM traps for the past 20 years. He reports catches of 34 moths on April 3, 7 on the 4th and 36 on the 5th. This compares to 16 moths on April 16 and 35 moths on May 3 last year.

Long Term observations indicate that peak flight and peak bloom of Snowdrift Crabapple is usually within a couple of days of each other. The ‘Snowdrift’ in the Sedgwick County Extension Arboretum was at the pink puffy bud stage on April 5 and should be in full bloom by Wednesday the 7th (if hot weather holds).

Good control of NPTM is timed at 7-10 days following peak catch on the first generation. Willy is considering applying his first generation application on the 10th. I think this could be extended through the 17th.

Editor’s Note: A number of products are available for control including lambda-cyhalothrin (Scimitar, Spectracide Triazicide, Bonide Caterpillar Killer) and acephate (Orthene). Spinosad is an effective organic control (Conserve; Fertilome Borer, Bagworm, Leaf Miner and Tent Caterpillar Spray; Captain Jack’s Dead Bug Brew). (WU)

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