UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION

TPM/IPM Weekly Report
for Arborists, Landscape Managers & Nursery Managers

Commercial Horticulture **March 27, 2026**

In This Issue...

Integrated Pest Management for Commercial Horticulture
extension.umd.edu/ipm

If you work for a commercial horticultural business in the area, you can report insect, disease, weed or cultural plant problems **(include location and insect stage)** found in the landscape or nursery to sklick@umd.edu

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Welcome to the 2026 Landscape and Nursery Weekly IPM Reports!

Spring is here and nature is getting busier. This is the first Landscape and Nursery IPM Report of the season, although we have already sent out two Special Pest Alerts (March 5 and March 20) given the amount of early season plant and pest activity that's been happening.

The IPM Reports are heavily used and appreciated by members of the green industries in the region. The IPM Reports are a strongly collaborative product that involves several members of the University of Maryland Extension community, and equally important, those of you that work in the nursery, landscape, arboriculture and other horticulture communities. You are the ones that help keep

Hyacinths in bloom.
Photo: Paula Shrewsbury, UMD

this newsletter timely and relevant when you email us (UME team, sklick@umd.edu) with images or updates on what plant and pest problems and beneficials are occurring on a given week. The more you inform us, the more useful the IPM Reports will be. PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO THE WEEKLY IPM REPORTS! Whether you would like to be a regular contributor or if you see something interesting (or concerning) during the season, please reach out and submit images and observations. This is also a way to get your name in the Weekly IPM Report (you can also opt out of including your name)! Please go to the article on how to submit pest and plant problems, and beneficial activity.

What Were the Temperatures Like This Winter? Any impacts on plants and insects?

By: Paula Shrewsbury

It seems appropriate that we look at weather patterns this year compared to past years as an indicator of potential impacts on insect activity and plants. One way to monitor temperature is to compare differences in growing degree day (DD) accumulations between years. DD are a measure of the "heat units" (related to temperature and the amount of time per day that an insect spends actively growing or plant developing) that accumulate over time. Since insect and plant development are temperature dependent, keeping track of the number of DD that accumulate over time allows prediction of activity of insect and plant phenology. In looking at the DD accumulations over the last four years (see the DD table), DD accumulations this spring are similar to those in 2023 and 2024, whereas last year (2025) there were only about half as many DD compared to the same time in 2026, 2024, and 2023. What this suggests is that insect and plant development and activity this year may be similar to what we saw a few years ago rather than last year.

We have had a pretty snowy and multiple days with cold winter temperatures this year. As we move into spring, we will continue to see winter injury on plants caused by the winter weather. See reports of winter injury below.

Degree days (DD) accumulation in late March over time.

Location	2026	2025	2024	2023
College Park, MD	95	48	91	103
Baltimore, MD	75	49	101	112
Salisbury/Ocean City, MD	124	49	121	125

Sad News

We are deeply saddened to share that a tragic accident occurred on March 20 at Catoctin Mountain Growers. Bob Van Wingerden, President and Owner, passed away on March 23 as a result of the accident. The obituary and service details for Bob are available on-line. Our condolences go out to his family and friends during this difficult time.

Monitoring for Ambrosia Beetle

By: Laura Nixon

Ambrosia beetles are small wood-boring beetles which often target stressed trees to infest; the beetles are attracted to the ethanol (ethyl alcohol) produced by these stressed or dying trees. An efficient way to monitor for adult ambrosia beetle is to bait traps with ethanol, which can be purchased as formulated lures (these can be sourced from various vendors including Alpha Scents and Evergreen Growers Supply). For traps, you can purchase Lindgren funnel traps, which visually mimic "tree trunks" for beetles; adults will fly to the ethanol baited trap, crawl down through the funnels, and get caught in the cup at the bottom for counting. Alternatively, you can construct a "wood bolt trap" by drilling through the center of a ~2 foot bolt of hardwood. Drill down as far as you can without breaking through the bottom, then fill this reservoir with ethanol (grain alcohol, not sanitizing alcohol) and cap with a cork or piece of wood. Some people coat the cut ends of the bolt with wax to help conserve the moisture and ethanol. Adult beetles will be attracted to and attack this wood bolt, resulting in frass tunnels or "tooth picks", wet spots, and small holes to show activity.

The best preventative strategy for ambrosia beetle is to implement best management practices for your trees to avoid stress. If you have a preexisting stressor in some of your trees, such as pests, diseases, or drought, too wet, be sure to closely monitor that area. Either trap type can be hung close to your trees of concern, either from a branch or other standing structure. In nurseries, the traps are often hung at the edges of production fields, especially where there is a wood edge border. The strong ethanol attractant will intercept adults and give you an early warning for populations in flight.

When ambrosia beetles are active, permethrins and bifenthrin products are registered for trunk sprays in nurseries and landscape. The idea is to protect the tree trunks so when adults chew their way through the bark, they become poisoned.

A Lindgren funnel trap for monitoring ambrosia beetles.
Photo: Stanton Gill, UME

An ethanol infused wood bolt to monitor for ambrosia beetle activity.
Photo: Suzanne Klick, UME

Spotted Lanternfly State Quarantine Expansion

By: Laura Nixon

Maryland Department of Agriculture announced on March 6th, 2026 that the spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*) quarantine zone has been expanded to include Dorchester, St. Mary's, Somerset, and Worcester counties. This is now a state-wide quarantine which requires businesses to hold a permit for the movement of regulated articles (see website for permit requirements). Regulated articles include plant material, associated packing materials, building materials, and vehicles. As a reminder, spotted lanternfly is currently present as overwintering egg masses only; the adult insects will lay their eggs on any solid surface, as pictured. Eggs can be disposed of by scraping them off the surface on which they were oviposited. We don't expect to see nymphs hatching until late April.

Uncovered spotted lanternfly egg masses (no waxy substance) laid on a fence post.
Photo: Mark Sutphin, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Spotted lanternfly egg mass laid on a rusty barn door. This image was captured as the "soft" un-sclerotized nymphs were hatching in 2019; these nymphs will darken up to black with white polka dots within a couple of hours.
Photo: Mark Sutphin, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Spotted lanternfly egg mass laid on the underside of a shelf fungus.
Photo: Laura Nixon, UME

Euonymus Leaf Notcher Caterpillar: Another early season defoliator

By: Paula Shrewsbury and Suzanne Klick

One of the earliest insects that causes damage to plants is the euonymus leaf notcher caterpillar (*Pryeria sinica*). In the U.S., this non-native caterpillar has been found damaging *Euonymus japonicus* and *E. kiautschovicus* 'Manhattan'. This insect overwinters in the egg stage. Eggs start hatching in this area in mid-March to early April. Activity is done by late May. There is only one generation of this pest each year, and plants are usually able to produce enough growth to hide the early season damage. Control is usually not warranted. These caterpillars tend to aggregate on the tips of branches so you can prune out parts of the plant with aggregations of caterpillars. If necessary, control options include *Bacillus thuringiensis* kurstaki (Btk), spinosad, tebufenozide, or other products labelled for caterpillars. You can find more information, images, and a video on the biology and life cycle at Bug of the Week article (M. Raupp, UMD).

Female moths of Euonymus leaf notcher emerge from pupae in the fall and line twigs of *Euonymus* with cluster of eggs.
Photo: M.J. Raupp, UMD

Look for aggregations of Euonymus leaf notcher caterpillars and their damage in March and April in MD.
Photo: M.J. Raupp, UMD

Eastern Tent Caterpillar is One of the First Caterpillars of the Season

By: Paula Shrewsbury

Eastern tent caterpillar (ETC), *Malacosoma americana* (Lepidoptera: Lasiocampidae) is one of the first caterpillars of the season to be active. They are a native insect and throughout the eastern U.S. They prefer to feed on cherry (wild and ornamental), crabapple, apples and other plants in the Rosaceae family. ETC overwinter as eggs on small branches of host plants and begin to hatch around 86 DDs, and when forsythia is in full bloom. Now is the time to monitor for egg hatch. After egg hatch, the small, early instar caterpillars walk along a branch until they reach a branch fork or crotch where they begin to make tents. As

Eastern tent caterpillar egg mass with newly emerging caterpillars.
Photo: M.J. Raupp, UMD

caterpillars continue to feed and grow, their tents increase in size forks. Around May, late instar caterpillars can be seen crawling on the ground in search of a protected location to pupate. Once adult moths emerge, they mate and females lay eggs on small branches of host plants. There is one generation a year.

ETC are an occasional outbreak pest where in some years populations are high and cause significant damage (defoliation), and other years not. Because ETC is an early season pest, it often can completely defoliate newly leafed out host plants. Most plants can withstand the defoliation and intervention in not always necessary. If tents are present, they should be physically destroyed when tents and caterpillars are small by using a stick (or another tool) to reach into the tent and tear them open. If tents are large and caterpillars abundant, after you physically destroy the tents, you can collect the caterpillars in a bag and dispose of them. If necessary, you can also target young caterpillars and treat foliage with Bacillus thuringienis kurstaki, tebufenozide (ex. Confirm, IGR) or spinosad (ex. Conserve) which should give good control with minimal impact on beneficials.

A large Eastern tent caterpillar tent with caterpillars. Tents are formed in tree forks.
Photo: P.M. Shrewsbury, UMD

A cherry tree that has been defoliated by Eastern tent caterpillars in late March. Use a stick to physically destroy tents for best control.
Photo: M.J. Raupp, UMD

Report Your Box Tree Moth Findings

By: Laura Nixon

We have not yet found any active box tree moth (*Cydalima perspectalis*) caterpillars when scouting in Washington County, MD or adjacent West Virginia counties. Although we have had some warm days this week, the interspersing cooler days are likely slowing down box tree moth emergence. While scouting, we found signs of last year's infestation at the top of an 8 feet boxwood in Berkeley County WV

A webbed sack (hibernaculum) containing an overwintering box tree moth caterpillar; these hibernacula will have leaves pulled around them, making them hard to spot.
Photo: Laura Nixon, UME

(pictured). If you were not monitoring your boxwoods last year and have plants of concern, you can check for these symptoms: patches of thinned out branches (in isolation could indicate other issues), brittle twigs, scarred over notching, empty pupal casings, webbed hibernaculum wrapped in leaves. Reports of active caterpillars in Delaware have increased this week, so please be vigilant with your boxwoods and report any activity to IPM alerts and MDA.

For box tree moth quarantine and control information, see the special alerts on March 5, 2026 and the March 20, 2026.

Thinning boxwood branches which have not recovered from last year's box tree moth defoliation.
Photo: Laura Nixon, UME

Notched leaves from a heavily infested boxwood (no 2026 activity).
Photo: Laura Nixon, UME

Boxelder Bug Emerging from Overwintering

By: Laura Nixon

Marie Rojas, IPM Scout, captured some pictures of boxelder bug (*Boisea trivittatus*) emerging from overwintering and sunbathing on the sunny side of her house this week. Aside from creating a nuisance by aggregating in large numbers, boxelder bug is not a significant plant pest and does not require any control. Marie noted a white spot on the back of one boxelder bug which appears to be fungus. Boxelder bug is susceptible to the insect-killing fungus *Beauveria bassiana*, which you may recognize as a common biopesticide product. *Beauveria* also occurs naturally in susceptible insect populations and can thrive when conditions are humid and temperate.

Adult boxelder bugs are active this week as they move out of their overwintering spots.
Photo: Marie Rojas, IPM Scout

Minute Cypress Scale

By Laura Nixon

Marie Rojas, IPM Scout, found minute cypress scale (*Carulaspis minima*) on Juniper (*Juniperus virginiana* 'Taylor') in Laytonsville, MD this week. As the name suggests, this scale is most commonly found on plants in the cypress family (Cupressaceae). Minute cypress scale has one generation a year and overwinter as mated females. In the coming month, they will begin to lay eggs, and we expect to see yellow-colored crawler emergence around 511 DDs, usually in June.

Control: Generally, minute cypress scale populations are managed by natural enemies in the landscape. If crawler populations are high, these can be treated with horticultural oil first and followed up with an insecticide if populations persist or the host plant is sensitive to oil damage.

Overwintering females of minute cypress found on *Juniperus virginiana* 'Taylor'. Photo: Marie Rojas, IPM Scout

Cottony Camellia/Taxus Scale

By: Suzanne Klick

Dave Freeman, Oaktree Property Care, found 2nd instar overwintering female cottony camellia/Taxus scale on camellia this week in McLean, VA. Hollies and yews are also common plant hosts of this scale. Throughout the spring, these females will feed and swell up. As they feed, they will produce a lot of honeydew on which sooty mold can grow.

Look for white egg masses in mid to late May and crawlers in early June. Wait until crawlers have hatched and then apply pyriproxyfen (e.g. Distance) or buprofezin (e.g. Talus) mixed with 0.5 - 1% horticultural oil.

Overwintering, 2nd instar females of cottony camellia/Taxus scale on camellia.
Photo: Dave Freeman, Oaktree Property Care

White Prunicola Scale on *Prunus*

By: Paula Shrewsbury, UMD

Marie Rojas (IPM Scout) detected white prunicola scale (WPS), *Psuedaulacaspis prunicola* (Diaspidae), on *Prunus* x *yedoensis* 'Okame' & 'Akebono', as well as *P.* 'Kanzan' (Kwanzan cherry) and *P.* 'Autumnalis' in Laytonsville, MD on March 26th. WPS attack over 20 plant genera and their preferred hosts are those in the *Prunus* genera, especially Japanese flowering cherry and cherry laurel, lilac and privet. WPS overwinter as adult females on the trunk and branches of their hosts. This scale is challenging to manage given they have 3 generations / year and the generations overlap since crawlers can be active over long periods of time. First generation crawlers of WPS emerge around 513 DDs. If you have populations of WPS, be monitoring closely for crawler activity.

For more information on degree days to predict crawler activity of white prunicola scale go to the UME Pest Predictive Calendar: https://extension.umd.edu/programs/agriculture-food-systems/program-areas/ornamental-horticulture/ipmnet/pest-predictive-calendar/

For more detailed information on the biology and management of WPS, see the October 24, 2025 IPM Report.

White prunicola scale found on the bark of *Prunus* sp. this week. Note the circular white female covers with yellow centers. Photo: Marie Rojas, IPM Scout

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker Damage

By: Suzanne Klick

We are receiving reports of yellow-bellied sapsucker damage this week. In early spring, sapsuckers drill small, circular holes to get to sap flow in the xylem. Later in the season, they will make shallow, rectangular wells to feed on sap in the phloem. Sapsuckers also feed on insects and spiders. There is little that can be done to prevent sapsucker damage on trees. Wrapping trunks with a barrier such as burlap or plastic mesh can help prevent damage during spring and fall migration periods. The difficulty with this method is not knowing on which tree sapsuckers will feed.

Sapsucker damage on a cedar in McLean, VA. Photo: Dave Freeman, Oaktree Property Care

Sap oozing from holes created by a sapsucker when feeding. Photo: Suzanne Klick

Winter Damage

By David L. Clement

Injury that occurs during the winter or early spring can result from exposure to drying winter winds, low temperatures, late frost or freezes. The most frequently seen symptoms include:

Leaf Scorch: Symptoms of this type of damage is most severe on shallow rooted evergreens such as azaleas, rhododendrons, holly, euonymus, cherry laurel, liriope, grape holly, boxwood, and mountain laurel. Even newly planted white pine and spruce can suffer needle scorch during their first season from limited root systems. In addition needled evergreens can suffer needle scorch in exposed conditions such as along roadsides and parking lots.

Winterburn damage on cherry laurel.
Photo: Miri Talabac, UME-HGIC

Winterburn damage on holly.
Photo: Dave Clement, UME

Other plants prone to leaf scorch and winter injury include those at their northern limit for winter hardiness. These include southern magnolia, crapemyrtle, aucuba, nandina, hardy gardenia, and camellia. Injury can occur on dry, windy, warm or sunny winter days when the ground is frozen. Plants are unable to move water from the frozen soil to replace the water being lost from the exposed leaves. Leaves curl and droop, then brown from the tips and margins, giving them a scorched appearance. Some plants, especially rhododendrons, try and cope by rolling their leaves to minimize leaf surface exposure. Most damage is during the winter, but in some cases symptoms can occur during the spring as new growth appears after winter dormancy.

Salt Injury: Heavy accumulations of deicing slats from surface applications or airborne spray, especially along roadsides or sidewalks can cause leaf and needle scorch and may kill buds and branch terminals. This damage is caused by desiccation of the more tender tissue in buds and new growth. Salt may also accumulate in the soil and cause root death from desiccation of root tissue. It's important to remember that deicing salt runoff from one sidewalk or parking lot may not cause problems, but the combined effect from numerous such events raise the harmful concentrations of salt in adjacent soil and bodies of water.

Blighting or Browning of New Growth: Warm temperatures in protected areas in February and March may stimulate buds, flowers, or shoots into growth too early. Subsequent cold weather and frosts will kill young buds and tender new growth resulting in fewer flowers and later leaf development. Frozen tissue damage frequently appears as blackened buds and leaves that may also drop off. Pruning out remaining bare branches will help stimulate new growth later in the spring.

Blasted or Damaged Blooms: This damage results when flower buds swell and then freeze during cold snaps or late frosts. Star magnolia and lilac flowers frequently suffer from this type of injury.

Branch Dieback and Leaf Yellowing: These symptoms occur from sunscald, frost cracks, root damage and cold weather following a warm spell. Frost cracks can occur during the winter on exposed bark, usually on the south side of a trunk, where warming and subsequent rapid cooling causes expansion and contraction of tissues resulting in cracks. These cracks can lead to damage of the vascular system and eventually disease cankers because of stress.

Ice and Snow Damage: Symptoms include bent or broken branches from the heavy weight of the ice or snow. Heavy snow can gently knocked from branches, but ice covered branches may actually be more brittle and suffer further damage if removal is attempted. Wind during ice storms will cause the most damage. White pines in our area are especially prone to winter ice and wind damage.

Winter Color of Evergreens: Symptoms of "winter color" can include gray, yellow, blue, purple, bluish green, brown and bronze. Examples in our area often include, Cryptomeria – bronze, yew – brown, *Juniperus virginiana* – brown, arborvitae – brown, low growing junipers such as *J. horizontalis*– purple, and white pines – yellow. Some evergreens such as Leyland cypress and spruce usually don't change color. Causal factors for 'winter color' can include low temperatures and drought stress. The foliage colors will revert back to normal when spring time temperatures return to normal.

Management Strategies:
Cultural practices that conserve soil moisture, prevent root damage, and promote "hardening off" prior to winter temperatures will help to reduce winter damage. Avoid later summer fertilization as this stimulates late-season growth that does not have time to "harden off" properly and is more prone to winter injury. When watering, soak the soil several inches deep and then allow it dry between waterings. Fresh water sprays on foliage and deep watering in the spring will also help wash deicing salts from the leaves or needles and flush salts through the root zone faster to help reduce desiccation damage. Deep watering will also encourage deeper rooting during the growing season which will help reduce damage from moderately dry periods and frozen soil.

A cryptomeria showing typical brown, winter color on March 5 (left) and the same tree on March 26 with much greener foliage.
Photos: Suzanne Klick, UME

Cedar Quince Rust

David L. Clement

Marie Rojas, IPM Scout, found cedar-quince rust on stems of *Juniperus virginiana* 'Taylor' in Montgomery County this week. The causal fungus is *Gymnosporangium clavipes* and is widely distributed throughout North America. This rust fungus requires a *Juniperus* and rosaceous host to complete its life cycle. Species of *Juniperus* that can serve as hosts include eastern red cedar (*J. virginiana*), Rocky Mountain (*J. scopulorum*), common (*J. communis*), prostrate (*J. horizontalis*) and Savin junipers (*J. sabina*).

Cedar quince rust is active this week in Montgomery County.
Photo: Marie Rojas, IPM Scout

Common rosaceous hosts include serviceberry (*Amelanchier*), hawthorn (*Crataegus*), apple/crabapple (*Malus*), pear (*Pyrus*), mountain-ash (*Sorbus*), Cotoneaster, common quince (*Cydonia*) and flowering quince (*Chaenomeles*).

On *Juniperus*, the pathogen produces orange fungal tissue that swells after periods of rain and becomes orange, gelatinous masses of spores. These spores are dispersed by wind and splashing rainwater. These infections form cankers that can girdle small branches, resulting in canopy dieback. Infected branches often persist and the cankers become a perennial source of rust spores in the tree's canopy.

On quince, crabapple, and hawthorn, the pathogen infects the shoot tips, fruit and leaves, producing pinkish-colored tendrils in mid- to late summer. Native serviceberry plantings can especially be severely affected by this disease resulting in gall-like stem cankers causing branch dieback.

Management

Rust spores can travel long distances so removal of one of the hosts from the property may not adequately control the disease. Prune out and discard any girdled stems and branches that develop and prune to promote air flow and sunlight, especially in the lower canopy. Control options in nurseries include the newer translaminar combination fungicides Mural and Postiva. Follow label directions about the number of applications per season.

Deer Damage

Deer damage is evident in landscapes. Elaine Menegon, Good's Tree and Lawn Care, found a holly in a landscape close to a house that has been fed heavily on by deer.

Deer damage on holly.
Photo: Elaine Menegon Good's Tree and Lawn Care

Beneficial of the Week

By: Paula Shrewsbury

Early season beneficials are important – be sure to conserve beneficial insects!

Spring is here and it is time to think about plant pest problems and beneficial insects. When the topic of beneficial insects and their relatives comes up, we often think of natural enemies (predators, parasitoids, and pathogens) that provide biological control services, and pollinators (bees and wasps, flies, beetles, and butterflies and moths) that provide pollination services. But don't forget the decomposers and detritivores (beetles, termites, flies, millipedes) that break down organic matter and dead things and recycle nutrients back into the food web. Throughout the season *Beneficial of the Week* will discuss these various beneficial insects. If there are any beneficials you would like to learn about or report, please let me know (pshrewsbury@umd.edu).

Mason bee female bringing pollen back to her nesting tube.
Photo: M.J. Raupp, UMD

Over the last few weeks, we have had fluctuations of warmer days and cooler ones – nothing too unusual for spring weather. Some insects, including several beneficials, become active early in the season as soon as the first warm day's start.

An adult female *Itoplectis conquisitor*, an ichneumon wasp that is a generalist parasitoid attacking a wide range of Lepidoptera species including bagworms. Photo: Henry Burton, BugGuide photo# 1044915.

For example, a few days ago I saw my first solitary bees which made me smile. Most years, they emerge from the bee tubes I have in my yard around St. Patrick's Day, give or take a week. Mid-March is also the time of year certain species of solitary bees emerge from their natural overwintering galleries to begin their adult stage of life. Some solitary bee species dig galleries in which they nest in the ground and others nest in "tubes" such as hollow stems of plants or old borer galleries left by beetles or caterpillars in wood. The bees collect pollen from early blooming plants such as maple, spring wildflowers, and weeds. They bring the pollen back to their nesting site, create pollen cakes that they drag into their tube or gallery, lay an egg on the pollen cake (the pollen provides food for the larva when it hatches), and then they go out and start again until their gallery is fully provisioned.

I have also seen natural enemies flying around already. In the last few nights, adult *Itoplectis* wasps have shown up at my porch light and inside the house. *Itoplectus* parasitoids are in the family Ichneumonidae and are known to attack caterpillar pupae, and some beetle and sawfly species. There are two species of *Itoplectis* that have been documented in MD (MD Biodiversity Project). Research on bagworms has found that *Itoplectis conquisitor* accounts for about 58% of bagworm parasitism. The other, *Itoplectis quadricingulata*, is known to attack pine tip and shoot moth pupae.

Other insect natural enemies that are active early in the season include ground beetle (or carabid) adults. Some species of ground beetle feed on other insects, while others feed on weed seeds. In past years, I have frequently

come across lacewing larvae at this time of year. Debris carrying lacewing larvae are relatively common on trees infested with armored scales such as Japanese maple scale. A good snack after a cold winter.

It is important to provide early season flowering trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants in your landscapes for these early pollinators and other beneficial insects, in addition to floral resources throughout the season. A great resource (one of many) that contains lists of plants that are good resources for pollinators and omnivorous natural enemies, and their bloom time, is Protecting and Enhancing Pollinators in Urban Landscapes. While you are out and about keep your eyes open for beneficials, and grow some good plants that will provide the food they might need.

Adult big-headed ground beetle, *Scarites subterraneus* (Carabidae), is a voracious predator as an adult and larvae and known to feed on cutworms, armyworms, fly larvae, ants, aphids, snails and slugs.
Photo: Frank Roylance

Under this piece of lichen is a predacious lacewing larva. Note the mandibles sticking out the left side of the "lichen".
Photo: M.J. Raupp, UMD

Weed of the Week

By: Kelly Nichols

After much anticipation, it is finally spring! As I write this on Wednesday afternoon, soil temperatures are hovering around 50 degrees here in Central Maryland. With the warmer temperature comes plenty of weeds, though. This week's weed is mouseear chickweed (***Cerastium fontanum* Baumg. ssp. *vulgare***). Thank you to Bill Miller, The Azalea Works, for the suggestion and pictures!

Figure 1. Emerging mouseear chickweed, taken in early January 2026. Note the hairs on the leaves.
Photo: Bill Miller, The Azalea Works.

Mouseear Chickweed Identification

- **Growth habit:** Low, creeping/mat-forming plant that can form dense patches. Stems may root where they contact the soil (at nodes).
- **Leaves:** Densely hairy (Figure 1); opposite, oval to oblong/spatula-shaped; and typically stalkless or short-stalked.
- **Stems:** Prostrate/spreading and hairy.
- **Flowers:** Small and white with 5 petals deeply notched (can look like 10 petals).
- **Seeds/fruit:** Many tiny brown seeds in cylindrical capsules.
- **Look-alike:** Common chickweed (Stellaria media) does not have hairs, does not root at the nodes, and is a winter annual.

Mouseear Chickweed Lifecycle & Reproduction

- Mouseear chickweed is generally a **patch-forming perennial** but can behave like a winter annual depending on conditions.
- Reproduces by **seed** and by **creeping stems that root at nodes/**
- Emergence/germination can occur **late summer through spring**, especially under cool, moist conditions.
- Tolerates **close mowing** and can persist as dense mats that crowd out turf.
- **Thin turf, shade,** and **frequent watering/chronic moisture** can favor chickweed invasion and persistence.

Figure 2. Mouseear chickweed next to a quarter for comparison, taken March 6, 2026. Photo: Bill Miller, The Azalea Works.

Mouseear Chickweed Management

Cultural control (foundation)

- **Cultural control:** Maintain dense, vigorous turf. Where feasible, improve drainage, reduce excess moisture from irrigation, and address compaction to make conditions less favorable for mouseear chickweed. For small populations in landscape beds, hand removal is recommended.
- **Chemical control:**

o Apply **pre-emergent herbicides** in late summer/ early fall. Prodiamine and pendimethalin are options in turf; flumioxazin, and dichlobenil are options in landscapes. Do not apply these products if desired species will be planted, as these herbicides will prevent them from emerging as well.

o Apply **early post-emergent herbicides** when mouseear chickweed plants are small and actively growing. Herbicide options include 2,4-D, MCPP, dicamba, and triclopyr. Take caution when applying these herbicides near desired ornamentals; do not apply them over tree and shrub roots. Since it is a perennial, repeat applications may be necessary.

Figure 3. Mouseear chickweed's small, white flower.
Photo: Mary Ellen (Mel) Harte, Bugwood.org.

Plant of the Week

By: Ginny Rosenkranz

One of the first trees to bloom in spring is *Magnolia stellata* or star magnolia. It can be grown as a slow-growing, medium-sized, flowering, deciduous shrub or a small tree that grows 15-20 feet tall and 10-15 feet wide. It has a dense, rounded crown. It is often grown as a muti-stemmed tree and is prized for its early spring bloom of star-shaped, white, fragrant, flowers. In the winter, the branches are covered with multiple, fuzzy-coated, tan buds. In late winter as the temperatures warm up just a bit, the 3–5-inch white flowers made up of 12-18 tepals open. The term tepal is used when the sepals and petals look exactly alike. Quite often the earliest flowers get damaged by the cold frost, but as the weather warms up, more 3-4 inch fragrant, white or blush pink flowers open in the morning and continue to bloom all day. The showy petals are strap-like and often wavey and collectively create a star-like flower. Because they bloom so early in the year, many suggest planting where it will get protection from the winter winds and not planting in a southern exposure due to frost damage. My star magnolia is planted with a southern exposure, and yes it does have frost damaged petals, but what I notice most of all is that the southern winds shape the silhouette of the tree similar to what plants at the beach look like. Beetles are the primary pollinators, although early butterflies and other pollinators will pollinate the fragrant flowers. Beetles were around about 100 million years ago before the modern pollinators evolved, so

the magnolia flowers have undifferentiated tepals and spirally arranged stamens to help the beetles pollinate the flowers. The beetles are after protein rich pollen and not nectar that the more modern pollinators favor. Once seeds are set, birds and small mammals will feast on the ripe seeds. The orange seeds are grown in cone-like fruits. After the flowers have finished blooming, the dark green leaves with light green fuzzy underside emerge, attached alternately to the slender brown stems. Each leaf is 2-4 inches long with an elliptical shape and an entire margin. In the autumn, the leaves turn yellow to bronze.

Plants thrive in full sun to part shade, but bloom best in full sun. They prefer moist, organically rich, well-drained loams and are intolerant of soil extremes of dry or wet soils and most urban pollutants. They grow in USDA zones 4-8 and have no serious insect or disease problems.

Beetles are a main pollinator of magnolias and feed only on the the pollen and not the nectar.
Photos: Ginny Rosenkranz, UME

Pest Predictive Calendar “Predictions"

By: Nancy Harding and Paula Shrewsbury

In the Maryland area, the accumulated growing degree days (DD) this week range from about 40 DD (Annapolis) to 124 DD (Salisbury). The Pest Predictive Calendar tells us when susceptible stages of pest insects are active based on their DD. Therefore, this week you should be monitoring for the following pests. The estimated start degree days of the targeted life stage are in parentheses.

Euonymus leaf-notcher caterpillar – egg hatch **(37 DD)**
White pine weevil – adult first activity **(84 DD)**
Eastern tent caterpillar – egg hatch **(86 DD)**
Boxwood spider mite – egg hatch **(141 DD)**
European pine sawfly – larva, early instar **(154 DD)**
Woolly elm aphid – egg hatch **(163 DD)**
Inkberry holly leafminer – adult emergence **(165 DD)**

Spiny witchhazel gall aphid – adult/nymph **(171 DD)**
Spruce spider mite – egg hatch **(179 DD)**
Boxwood psyllid – egg hatch **(184 DD)**

See the Pest Predictive Calendar for more information on DD and plant phenological indicators (PPI) to help you better monitor and manage these pests.

Degree Days (as of March 25, 2026)

Annapolis Naval Academy (KNAK)	40	
Baltimore, MD (KBWI)	75	
Belcamp (FS836)	58	
College Park (KCGS)		95
Dulles Airport (KIAD)	98	
Ft. Belvoir, VA (KDA)		99
Frederick (KFDK)	63	
Gaithersburg (KGAI)	82	
Greater Cumberland Reg (KCBE)	83	
Martinsburg, WV (KMRB)	80	
Millersville (MD026)	85	
Natl Arboretum/Reagan Natl (KDCA)		114
Perry Hall (C0608)	54	
Salisbury/Ocean City (KSBY)		124
St. Mary's City (Patuxent NRB KNHK)		94
Westminster (KDMW)		112

Important Note: We are using the Online Phenology and Degree-Day Models site. Use the following information to calculate GDD for your site: Select your location from the map Model Category: All models Select Degree-day calculatorThresholds in: Fahrenheit °F Lower: 50 Upper: 95 Calculation type: simple average/growing dds Start: Jan 1

Conferences

June 16, 2026
2026 Eastern Shore Procrastinators Conference
Location: Zoom

June 18, 2026
MNLGA Field Day
Location: Mt Cuba Center, Hockessin, DE

June 26, 2026
Montgomery County Pesticide Procrastinators Conference
Location: Derwood, MD

IPM Scouts' Diagnostic Sessions (1 - 3 p.m.)
June 23, 2026
July 22, 2026
August 26, 2026
Location: CMREC, Ellicott City, MD

Commercial Ornamental IPM Information
http://extension.umd.edu/ipm

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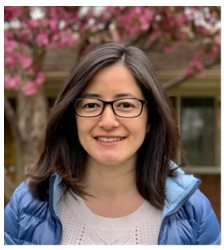

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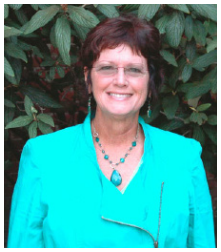

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