

Plant Health Care Report

Scouting Report of The Morton Arboretum

August 16– August 29, 2008

Issue 2008.18

Final Issue of the season!

Our report includes up-to-date disease and insect pest reports, as well as color images, for northeastern Illinois. You'll also find a table of accumulated growing degree days throughout Illinois, precipitation, and plant phenology indicators to help predict pest emergence.

Quick View

What Plants Are In Bloom At The Arboretum?

We've run out of indicator plants, but here is a look at what's blooming at The Arboretum. The tropical looking Cannas are in full bloom.

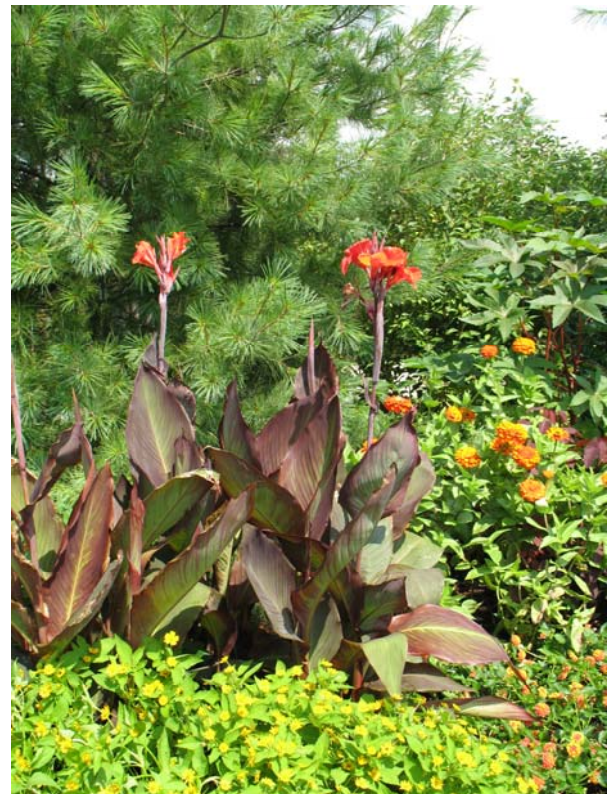
Accumulated Growing Degree Days (Base 50): 1989

Insects

- Milkweed tussock moth
- American dagger moth
- Southern oak dagger moth
- Yellow bear caterpillar
- Katydid
- Soldier beetle
- Hummingbird clearwing moths

Diseases

- Smooth patch
- Measles on peonies
- Lily-of-the-valley anthracnose
- Septoria leaf spot
- Volutella on boxwood



Feature Article

- Illinois Maples: A Special Blend
By Thomas Green and George Ware

Degree Days and Weather Information

Through August 29, we are at 1989 growing degree days which is 22 days behind the historical average (1937-2007) and 25 days behind last year.

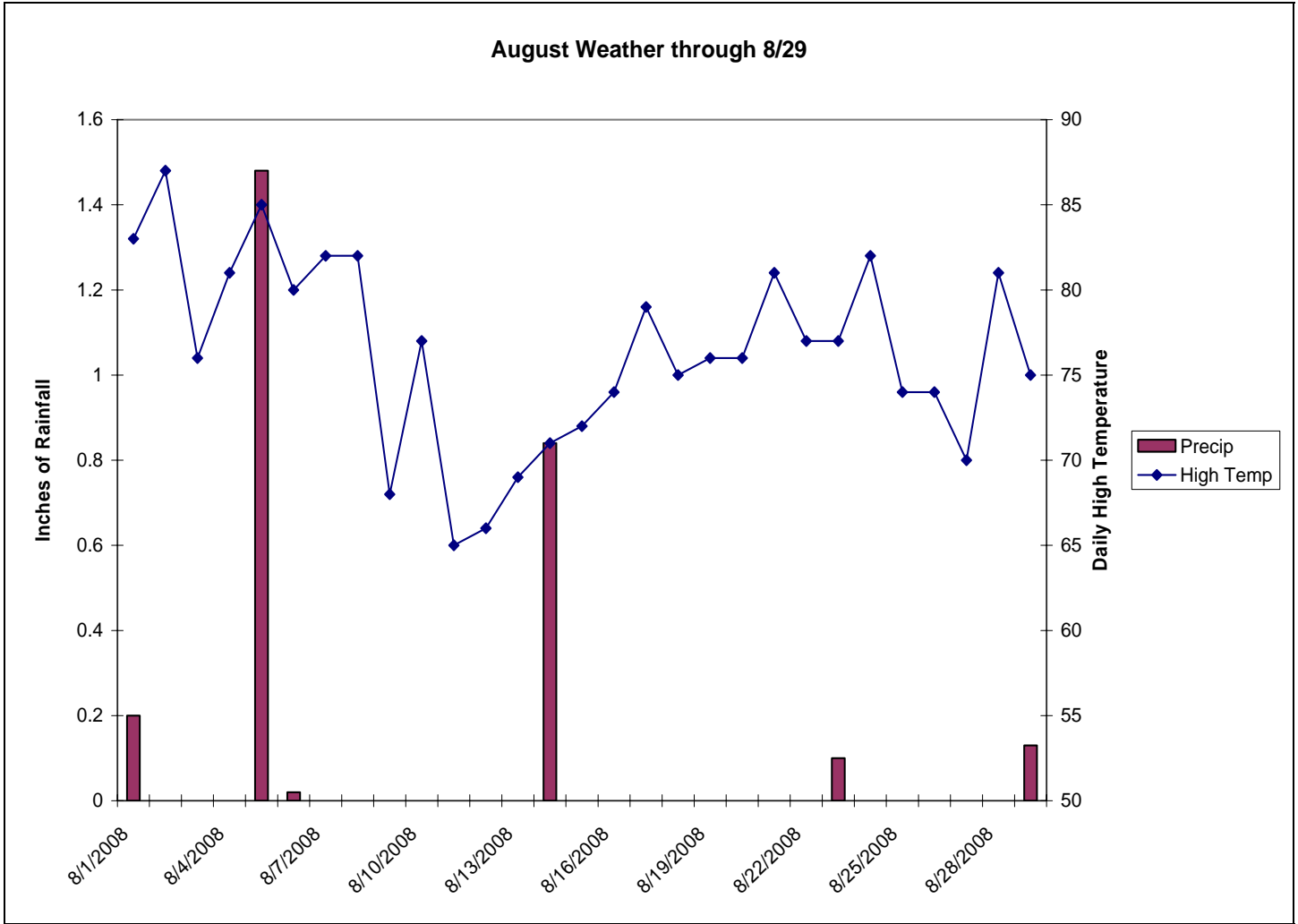
Location	Growing Degree Days through August 29	Precipitation between August 16 to August 29 in inches
The Morton Arboretum (Lisle, IL)	1989.0	0.23
Chicago Botanic Garden (Glencoe, IL)*	2148.5	0.29
Chicago O-Hare Airport*	2261.5	0.15
Aurora, IL	2156.5	
Bloomington, IL	2354.0	
Champaign, IL	2456.5	
DuPage County Airport (West Chicago, IL)	2306.0	
Midway Airport	2464.5	
Danville, IL	2598.5	
Decatur, IL	2565.5	
DeKalb, IL	2171.0	
Moline, IL	2415.0	
Palwaukee Airport (Wheeling, IL)	2235.0	
Peoria, IL	2584.0	
Peru, IL	2566.0	
Pontiac, IL	2292.5	
Rantoul, IL	2702.5	
Rockford, IL	2295.0	
Romeoville, IL	2212.5	
Springfield, IL	2586.0	
Waukegan, IL	1951.5	
Madison, WI	2004.5	
Milwaukee, WI	1946.0	

**Thank you to Mike Brouillard, Green Living, Inc. and Chris Yooning, Chicago Botanic Garden for supplying us with this information.*

We obtain most of our degree day information from the Virtual Arborist web site. For additional locations and daily degree days, go to <http://virtualarborist.com/>.

August Weather

The average temperature through August 29 was four degrees warmer than our historical average (1937-2007). It was drier by 0.94 inches of rainfall than the average August. The chart below provides daily precipitation and temperature highs for August.



Summary of August Temperature and Precipitation Data

	Through August 29, 2008
Average Daily Temperature	76° F
Historical Avg. Daily Temp.	72° F
High Temperature	87° F
Low Temperature	43° F
Total Precipitation	2.77 in.
Historical Precipitation	3.71 in.
Total Days with Precipitation	6

This Week's Sightings

Milkweed tussock moth



Milkweed tussock moth caterpillars (*Euchaetes egle*) were found devouring the leaves of common milkweed plant (*Asclepias syriaca*). They have black and white “hair pencils” along their front, back, and sides and six pairs of thick yellow and black tufts of hair along their middle and grow up to an inch long. The caterpillars feed in colonies and roll into balls, dropping to the ground when disturbed. They are late season feeders on all kinds of milkweeds, so check your butterfly weed (*Aesclepias tuberosa*). They may defoliate patches of milkweed. Adult males sing to attract females by making lovely clicking sounds (there’s nothing like a serenade to melt your heart).

Control: *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* (Btk) will kill young caterpillars, but is not as effective against older larvae.

American dagger moth

American dagger moth (*Acronicta americana*) caterpillars are feeding on copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Atropunicea') foliage. The larvae also feed on apple, basswood, maple, oak, redbud, elderberry, and willow. This two-inch long caterpillar has long hair with five black tufts of hair called hair pencils, two pairs emerging mid body and one hair pencil emerging from its posterior. The hairs on the body of the caterpillar can be either white or bright canary yellow with orange prolegs (the yellow hair and orange “feet” reminds me of a little chick). We’ve seen both colors. The caterpillars have black heads. Many of us were quite taken with this adorable caterpillar. The insect overwinters as a pupa.

Control: None required since this insect rarely occurs in damaging numbers.



Good web site:

<http://www.entomology.ualberta.ca/searchingspeciesdetails.php?c=8&rnd=21103703&sp=1&s=2813>

<http://www.forestryimages.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=1791013>



Southern oak dagger moth

The southern oak dagger moth caterpillar (*Acronicta increta*) was found feeding on oak (*Quercus* spp.) leaves. In late summer, mature caterpillars can usually be found resting in a “c” shape position on the undersides of oak and chestnut leaves. This dagger moth’s body color is salmon to orange, with paired white splotches along its back. Its large head has a white marble-like pattern. The last instar color patterns can be quite variable. Mature caterpillars reach up to one inch in length.

Control: None required since this insect rarely occurs in damaging numbers.

Yellow bear caterpillar

The yellow bear caterpillar (*Spilosoma virginica*), a type of tiger moth, has been spotted feeding at the Arboretum. This is one active and fast caterpillar. They feed on many different types of trees, shrubs, and low growing plants. The yellow bear is the most common caterpillar found in gardens. Early instars are cream to yellow color and darken as they age. In fact, the last instars turn red-brown in color; larvae grow over 1 ½ inches long. The caterpillars’ bodies are covered in long, soft setae (hairs). Some of their long hairs are nearly three body segments in length. The pupa overwinters.

Control: *Btk* will kill young caterpillars, but is not as effective against older larvae.

Good web site:

<http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/insects/cateast/spilvirg.htm>



Photo taken by Allen W. Barron

Katydid



Photo taken by Allen W. Barron

I had the pleasure to witness a rare photo op of a katydid this past week. Katydid are relatives of grasshoppers and crickets. They are unique with their grasshopper head, long grasshopper hind legs and veined wings, and shaped like leaves. Katydid grow over two inches long and are green in color. Males and females make sounds by rubbing their forewings (front wings) together. During the summer evening and night, you can hear their loud rasping noises, repeated lisps, or tics. Katydid hear sounds through tympana (hearing organs, like ears) that are located on their forelegs. They prefer to spend most of their time in the canopy of trees, which is why they are usually heard and not seen.

There are more than 7,000 different types of katydid.

Most of them eat leaves, fruits, and flowers. There are a few species that prey on insects. If handled too roughly, all katydids are capable of biting.

Soldier Beetle – Good Guys!



Goldenrod soldier beetles (also known as Pennsylvania leatherwing or *Chauliognathus pennsylvanicus*) are feeding on the pollen of Zagreb threadleaf coreopsis (*Coreopsis verticillata* 'Zagreb'). This is a beneficial insect that, in its larval form, eats soft-bodied insects such as grasshopper eggs and small caterpillars. The adult, which is what we're seeing now, feeds on pollen and soft-bodied insects such as aphids. Adult soldier beetles are about 1/2 inches long and orange with two elongate parallel dark spots on the back. They resemble a cross between a firefly and a yellow jacket. Adults are commonly found on flowers, especially goldenrod. Larvae are long, slender, dark brown to gray, and worm-like. The body is covered with tiny dense bristles and appears velvety. Soldier beetle larvae usually spend the winter in damp soil, plant debris, or under loose bark.

Many beneficial insects eat pollen as an adult so growing good pollen plants in the landscape encourages beneficial insects such as soldier beetles. Other good plants to attract beneficials are plants in the carrot family, such as dill and fennel, and plants in the aster family, such as coneflower, cosmos, coreopsis, and yarrow. Besides providing pollen for food, the flowers act as great landing pads for the adult insects.

Good web site:

<http://www.uky.edu/Ag/CritterFiles/casefile/insects/beetles/soldier/soldier.htm>

Hummingbird Clearwing Moths

We've received some questions about the hummingbird clearwing moths (*Hemaris thysbe*) flying around our flowers. These aren't pests either, but sometimes we like to write about insects that are neat. Hummingbird moths beat their wings very rapidly, causing their wings to look like a blur, and hover over flowers, sticking their proboscis (tubular feeding and sucking organ) into flowers to feed on the nectar. This really makes them look like hummingbirds when you first see them. Hummingbird moths also like feeding on trumpet vine flower nectar. I was unable to get a good picture because they move so fast. They are quite fascinating, and definitely worth a trip out to the Arboretum to see them yourself!

Good web site (great pictures):

http://www.fcps.edu/islandcreekes/ecology/hummingbird_moth.htm

Measles on peony

Cladosporium leaf blotch has been found on a few of our peonies. This disease is also known as red blotch or measles, although, to be honest, the origin of the common name doesn't fit what we found. (The spots don't look red or like any measles my family ever had.) Instead, symptoms are large, circular, dark purple spots on the upper surface of the leaves and corresponding light brown spots on the lower surface of the leaves. We placed the leaves overnight in our favorite piece of equipment, the humidity chamber (or plastic bag with a moist paper towel in it), to encourage sporulation.



Under the microscope, we found the brown, lemon-shaped spores of *Cladosporium*.

Control: Sanitation is important. Dispose of diseased plant parts at the end of the growing season to reduce inoculum. For chemical recommendations, refer to the *Commercial Landscape and Turfgrass Pest Management Handbook 2007* (CPM) if you are a commercial applicator or *Home, Yard and Garden Pest Guide* (HYG) from the University of Illinois if you are a homeowner.

Web site: http://www.ag.uiuc.edu/~vista/pdf_pubs/631.pdf

Lily-of-the-valley anthracnose



Anthracnose (*Ascochyta majalis*) is a common disease on lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*). On this plant, it causes circular to oval, brown spots with purplish red margins. The spots are one-half inch in diameter or larger. Diseased tissue drops out and the foliage dies prematurely. It does not kill the plants but does weaken them. As a result of infection, there may be fewer flowers next year.

Control: Destroy diseased foliage in the fall and remove diseased plants when seen.

Good web site:

<http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/hortanswers/detailProblem.cfm?PathogenID=154>

Septoria leaf spot

Septoria leaf blight was diagnosed on Japanese kerria (*Kerria japonica*). This disease can be pretty destructive of kerria leaves. Leaves become covered with small brown and yellow spots and may fall prematurely. Kerria has also been very susceptible to a canker disease on the stems over the past few years.

Control: Remove and eradicate diseased leaves to reduce inoculum. Give plants adequate space so leaves dry thoroughly and air movement is unimpeded.



Volutella on boxwood



Salmon-pink masses of conidia.

We received many samples of volutella stem blight caused by the fungus *Pseudonectria rouselliana* on boxwood (*Buxus* spp.). *Volutella buxi* is the name for the imperfect stage of the fungus (the imperfect stage produce asexual spores called conidia). In moist weather, numerous clusters of conidia appear as salmon-pink masses on stems and leaves which is the most distinguishing symptom. The volutella fungus often infects wounds caused by winter injury and usually follows winter and frost injury. The connection between the fungus and winter injury is still being researched.

Volutella stem blight can cause stem tips and twigs to die back. Cankers may form at the soil line or on branches. Foliar symptoms are similar to those caused by winter injury. Leaves will turn orange to bronze and then straw-colored in the middle or top part of the plant. English and American boxwoods (*Buxus sempervirens* spp.) are susceptible.

Control: Prune out infected branches to healthy tissue and discard. Volutella usually does not kill boxwoods, but can disfigure them. Refer to the HYG for a fungicide spray schedule.

Good web sites:

<http://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheets/hgic2052.htm>

<http://hyg.aces.uiuc.edu/secure/subscribers/200302d.html>

Smooth patch

You know it's the end of the season when we're desperate enough to report smooth patch. There is no perfect definition of plant disease, but one we like is "a condition in which a plant differs from a normal, healthy plant in either structure or function." Technically, smooth patch is a "disease" in that it changes the appearance of bark, but does not harm the tree. It is caused by the fungus *Aleurodiscus oakesii*. The fungus decomposes and sloughs off the outer, dead bark of the tree, usually of American elm (*Ulmus americana*), American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*), sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) and white oak (*Quercus alba*). The result of the sloughing is patches of bark that are grayish, slightly sunken, and smoother than the original bark. Patches range from a few inches to more than a foot across. Smaller patches may coalesce into large patches, and this is what we usually notice. Because this "disease" of the dead bark does not harm the tree, no control is necessary.

Control: Control is not warranted since the fungus does not invade living tissue and does not cause cankers or internal decay.



Feature Article:

Illinois Maple: A Special Blend

Written By:

Thomas Green, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

Western Illinois University and

George Ware, Ph.D.

Dendrologist Emeritus

The Morton Arboretum

Arborists are sometimes baffled as to the identity of hard maples in western Illinois and eastern Iowa. The Illinois maple is a hard maple native to Illinois that contains the characters of black maple (*Acer nigrum*), and sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*). The “Real McCoy” black maple is found in Iowa from Iowa City west to the Nebraska-South Dakota border. “Real McCoy” black maple has a thick, more leathery leaf with a raised center and margins that droop. The under-surface of the leaf is covered with a brownish tomentum (a covering of matted or fine hairs on the plant leaf). The leaf margin is entire (a smooth margin without notches or indentations) with three pointed primary lobes with smooth, non-pointed secondary lobes in between. At the base of some of the petioles on the ends of vigorous shoots are stipules (refers to outgrowths borne on either side of the base of leafstalk) that might be small and single lobed to larger and more leaf-like.

The eastern sugar maple has a thinner and flatter leaf with five prominent lobes and small sharp-pointed lobes between major lobes. It is glabrous beneath, and the petiole base is estipulate (with no bract). If there are differences between the size and shape of the flowers and fruit or appearance of the bark, it is not known to me.

The eastern sugar maple grows in well-drained and moist (mesic) soil. It is known to do poorly in saturated, compacted and sodic (containing sodium) soil. The black maple is known to develop roots first and grow more slowly from seed. It can be found doing well on well drained but dry pasture soil in Iowa. The Illinois maple can be found in all hard maple forests in Illinois. It is a maple that has a combination of the features of both the black and sugar maple. On some trees the leaves may be thicker, curved downward and have subdued lobes but be glabrous beneath and have no stipules. Other trees may have the sharp pointed lobes and thin leaves of the sugar maple but be tomentose beneath or have stipules. As one travels the highways of western Illinois, veteran Illinois maples line the roadways and dominate the parks and old cemeteries. The further west one travels the more likely that the features of the black maple outweigh the features of sugar maple. In towns like LaHarpe, Roseville, Blandensville, and Carthage, trees of 24” diameter and 60’ height are common place. These trees may be 75 to 100 years in age. Trees of this age had to have been planted, having been grown from local trees. This was before the use of cultivars. Now, most of our cultivars are sugar maple, like ‘Green Mountain’ are taken from eastern sources. ‘Green Column’ is a known “Real McCoy” black maple, but it is grafted onto seedling sugar maple.

During the flood of 1993, some Illinois maples survived two months of flooding (July-September), while the sugar maples rapidly died. Does the Illinois maple possess more flood tolerance than sugar maple? Does the Illinois maple possess more urban parkway tree tolerance than sugar maple? Only time and testing will tell. Does the Illinois maple (seeds selected from trees growing along the parkways and highways in Western Illinois) have attributes that should permit its use as a better parkway tree for Illinois?

The season in review

The season started out with many of us wondering if the warm weather would ever arrive. The cool weather did provide us with one benefit, a prolonged spring flowering tree, shrub, and bulb season. I was beginning to think my tulips were going to bloom all summer long. It was a spectacular sight, all to the delight of us nature lovers.

Even though we had an average amount of precipitation this season, the cool spring did provide us with the right conditions for fungal diseases. It seems like every plant has some kind of leaf spot on them. We had a good amount of

apple scab infections. The cedar rust diseases on rose family plants were in also in good supply. Sycamores had their usual anthracnose infections, along with ash, oak, dogwood and maple trees. Rose rosette seemed to be a rare sighting, but black spot on rose was easily spotted.

Then there were the insects! It is a three way tie for the title of “The Bad Boy” of the season. There were the gypsy moths, which caused quite an uproar with some serious infestations in Lisle, Naperville, Downers Grove and Glen Ellyn. If your tree was not attacked by the gypsy moth, there was always the Japanese beetle which feasted upon many trees and plants. Everywhere that you look you can see the lacy leaves, damage from the Japanese beetle. Then last but not least, bagworms!! Many homeowners have lost many trees from serious infestations of bagworms. Those that handpicked them off their trees said that they literally had buckets full. The plant clinic received hundreds of calls on these bad boys.

The insect causing us the biggest concern these days is the emerald ash borer. There are 22 more new sightings since August 2007. The infested locations are in the Illinois counties of Cook, Kane, LaSalle, DuPage, Will, McHenry, and McLean. Luckily we still have not yet seen them here on our grounds, but we do have our trap tree set up.

The four-lined plant bug has been making itself known feeding on many types of plants in gardens this past season. Galls! Galls! Galls! An aesthetic issue of this season, galls were in abundance and there’s not much we can do about them. They usually do not harm your tree, but the way some can disfigure the foliage can either disgust you or fascinate you

Insects that were nearly impossible to find this season are the Eastern tent caterpillars, which has been the case for several years now. The redbud leaffolder which were fairly plentiful last year, but this was not the case this year. And there have been fewer calls on the European elm flea weevil and ash flower galls.

Every year there is something new to learn about in this job--and that’s what keeps it fun.

Thank you!

Time flies when you’re having fun!! This being my first season of writing The Plant health Care Report, I would like to personally thank everyone for their help and patience, it has been a wonderful adventure and learning experience. The Plant Health Care Report is a team effort and could not have been written without the help and knowledge of many people. I would like to thank our faithful scouts, Arboretum horticulturists Joseph Krol (Joe will be retiring this year, he will truly be missed), Brian Malatia, Philip Riske, Emma Sommerville, Ron Picco, John Sosnowski, Mary Schmitt, Lyndsay Anderson, Jesse Dahl, Katrina Schneller, Merrill McNicholas, and Veta Bonnewell. Also thank you to the Plant Clinic and their volunteers for alerting us to the homeowners’ insect and disease problems; Donna Danielson, Plant Clinic Assistant (Donna also contributed to our scouting efforts by keeping an eye out for those pesky insects and diseases); Doris Taylor, Plant Information Specialist; and Dr. Fredric Miller, research entomologist at The Morton Arboretum and professor at Joliet Junior College, all of whom edited the report for content. Carol Belshaw, Plant Clinic volunteer, who has been the main editor for punctuation and grammar (we are so grateful for her help); Michael Brouillard, Green Living, Inc., and Chris Yooning, Chicago Botanic Garden, reported degree days, precipitation, and sightings in their locations weekly; Rebecca Szczelaszczyk, senior grower, faithfully supplied us with weather data on our grounds; Claudia Parish, of Parish Designs, makes our website so beautiful every week. I would also like to thank our feature article authors Donna Danielson and George Ware for their contributions to the report. We regret if we left anyone out as it was not intentional.

We are grateful that the Arboretum continues to fund the Plant Health Care program. We would also like to thank our paying subscribers for their continued support.

Have a wonderful dormant season! We look forward to seeing you again next spring!

Index

Following is an index of the various subjects in this year's report. The number after each subject is the report number. For example, using the chart below, Oak Anthracnose 5 means that it was discussed the PHC report 2008.05 or the newsletter dated May 10 – 16, 2008.

Report Number	Dates	Report Number	Dates
2008.01	March 31 - April 2, 2008	2008.10	June 14 – 21, 2008
2008.02	April 3 - 18, 2008	2008.11	June 22 – 27, 2008
2008.03	April 19 - May 2, 2008	2008.12	June 28 – July 3, 2008
2008.04	May 3 - 9, 2008	2008.13	July 4 – 10, 2008
2008.05	May 10 - 16, 2008	2008.14	July 11 – 18, 2008
2008.06	May 17 - 23, 2008	2008.15	July 19 – 25, 2008
2008.07	May 24 – 30, 2008	2008.16	July 26 – August 1, 2008
2008.08	May 31 – June 6, 2008	2008.17	August 2 – 15, 2008
2008.09	June 7 – 13, 2008	2008.18	August 16 – 29, 2008

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Quote of the week: “An important gardening judgment – Know when to do nothing!” – Author Unknown



The Plant Health Care Report is prepared by Trica Barron, Plant Health Care Technician, and edited by Donna Danielson, Plant Clinic Assistant; Fredric Miller, PhD, research entomologist at The Morton Arboretum and professor at Joliet Junior College; Doris Taylor, Plant Information Specialist, and by Carol Belshaw, Plant Clinic volunteer. The information presented is believed to be accurate, but the authors provide no guarantee and will not be held liable for consequences of actions taken based on the information.

The *2007 Commercial Landscape & Turfgrass Pest Management Handbook* (CPM), for commercial applicators, and the *Home, Yard & Garden Pest Guide* (HYG) for homeowners from the University of Illinois, are available by calling (800-345-6087). You may also purchase them online at <https://pubsplus.uiuc.edu/ICLT-07.html> (commercial handbook) and <https://pubsplus.uiuc.edu/C1391.html> (homeowners' guide). One further source is your local county extension office.

This report is available on-line at The Morton Arboretum website at <http://www.mortonarboretumphc.org/>.

For pest and disease questions, please contact the Plant Clinic at (630) 719-2424 between 10:00 and 4:00 Mondays through Saturdays or email plantclinic@mortonarb.org. Inquiries or comments about the PHC reports should be directed to Trica Barron at tbarron@mortonarb.org.

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