# Look What's Out There

## in

## Integrated Pest Management

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*http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/*

### New Allergies May be Linked to Ladybugs

Every year, houses throughout the country are infested with those little reddish-orange, black spotted invaders, the Asian lady beetle. Until recently, lady-bugs were little more than a nuisance, which was tolerated because of their benefits as biocontrols. This may no longer be the case. According to a study conducted by researchers at the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville, lady beetles may be a new source of allergens for some people. The study consisted of a 17-question survey that was mailed to single family residences in Kentucky and southern Ohio that had been previously infested with lady beetles. The survey was designed to determine if lady beetle infestation resulted in or intensified allergic responses in individuals living in infested homes. Of the 99 people that responded to the survey, 77% reported having seasonal allergies, half of which stated that their symptoms intensified when lady beetles were in their home. Of those reporting worsening of symptoms, 31% said their reactions increase to the point where they required extra allergy medication. The symptoms reported were sneezing, runny nose, itchy eyes, coughing, and wheezing or shortness of breath. Most of the respondents took measures to get rid of the lady beetles such as vacuuming, spraying and about a quarter hired pest management professionals. Further testing (skin prick tests) is needed to see how sensitive the general population is to lady beetles. Nonetheless, this survey is similar to other surveys that have shown, with a high degree of accuracy, links between other allergens and allergic reactions.

(*Pest Control, March 2006*)

### Disease-Resistant Cultivars Key to American Elm Comeback

Ever since Dutch elm disease began devastating whole populations of American elm in the 1930s, people have been reluctant to plant this once popular urban shade tree. The American elm was such a popular tree due to its graceful vase shape with few low branches and also for its ability to adapt to harsh urban environments. For these reasons there has been increasing demand in recent years for American elms with resistance to Dutch elm disease. According John Hartman, a plant pathologist with the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, there are several new cultivars of American elm which exhibit disease resistance. Hartman is among a group of University of Kentucky plant pathologists, entomologists and horticulturists testing seventeen of these new elm cultivars as part of a national elm cultivar trial. Although UK's trial is still in the early stages, Hartman said much has already been learned about the trees.

"Although all are supposed to be resistant to

Dutch elm disease, we already know which ones are attractive to Japanese beetles and elm leaf miners," he said. "As the trees mature, they will be evaluated for their form and stature and for their fall color," as well as resistance. In the meantime, Hartman said it is a good time to introduce some of the new American elm cultivars into landscapes and along streets, "at least on a trial basis", but he suggests that no more that 10 percent of the trees in any one particular city should be American elm. That way if a new strain of the fungus comes along the impact on the urban setting will be much less than what was seen when the original American elm plantings were decimated by the disease. Some of the new cultivars include Valley Forge and New Harmony, which have "excellent" disease resistance, and Jefferson and Washington elms, which are cultivars selected by the National Park Service for planting in national parks.

(*Plant Health Progress, December 2006*)

## Agricultural and Environmental News

### U.S Organic Farming, Where Are We Now?

Organic farming is one of the fastest growing segments of U.S. agriculture. Prior to Congress passing the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, there was less than a million acres of certified organic farmland in the U.S. Since then total organic farmland has quadrupled. As of 2005, all 50 States in the U.S. had some certified organic farmland amounting to a total of 4.0 million acres of U.S. farmland-2.3 million acres of cropland and 1.7 million acres of rangeland and pasture-dedicated to organic production systems. Although great strides have been made in organic farming and popularity of this practice is on the rise, certified organic cropland and pasture only accounted for 0.5 percent of the total farm land in 2005. This low overall level of farm participation may be due to the many obstacles (high managerial costs and risks of shifting to a new way of farming, limited awareness of organic farming systems, lack of marketing and infrastructure, and inability to capture marketing economies) farmers face in adapting to organic production . Still, many U.S. producers are embracing organic farming in order to lower input costs, conserve nonrenewable resources, capture high-value markets, and boost farm income.

Both national and state governments and agencies have made efforts to increase organic production by standardizing certifications, streamlining interstate commerce of organically grown products, providing subsidies for conversion from conventional to organic farming, and starting or expanding programs and pilot projects to help organic producers with production and marketing problems and risk.

The United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service has compiled data on national and state totals with regards to organic crop and livestock production. To access this information, go to http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/organic/.
For more USDA information on organic farming in the U.S. go to: http://www.ers.usda.gov/features/Organic/organicfarming.htm

(*USDA Economic Research Service; Data Sets, Organic Production; December 2006*)

### Asian Soybean Rust in 2007

Asian soybean rust has been present in the U.S. since 2005 with confirmed infected areas in Alabama, Georgia, Florida and the Carolinas. In 2006 soybean rust was confirmed again to be in these states along with confirmed occurrences of the disease further north that were reported later in the growing season. If conditions favorable for spore dispersal and infection occur early on in 2007, this fungus may have a large impact on soybean production in the major growing regions of the Mid-South and Midwest. Overall, it is expected that Asian soybean rust will be more wide spread in 2007.

There has been success in managing soybean rust

with fungicide application if it is applied in a timely manner. Two new active ingredients, Cyproconazole and Metconazole, have been granted section 18 exemptions by the U.S. EPA for the control of soybean rust. An additional four new active ingredients are being considered for control of Asian soybean rust.

(*Crop Insights, January 2007*)

## Did You Know That

The 3 mm long, minute pirate bug (*Orius tristicolor*) can kill 30 or more spider mites in a single day. Biological Information Center, NC State University, http://cipm.ncsu.edu/ent /biocontrol /goodbugs)

## Events

**February 19 and 20, 2007**
"Meeting the Growing Demand for Natural and Organic Lawn and Landscape Care" is a workshop on low-impact and organic landscaping practices to be held in Madison, WI. Presented by the IPM Institute of North America. For more information see: http://www.ipminstitute.org/pdf/Landscape%20Flyer%20011207.pdf.

**February 22 and 23, 2007**
2007 Conservation Tillage and Technology Conference, Ohio Northern University, Ada, Ohio. Program details and registration information available at: http://ctc.osu.edu.

**February 28, March 5, and March 14, 2007**
Organic Land Care Basic Training for Municipal Officials and Transitioning Landscapers. Presented by the National Coalition for Pesticide-Free Lawns. More information available at: www.pesticidefreelawns.org/training

**March 8, 2007**
Perennial Plant Conference, Univ. of Connecticut, Storrs Campus. For more information go to: http://www.hort.uconn.edu/Ipm/greenhs/htms/pernconf07.htm

**March 16, 2007**
Western Pennsylvania Turf Conference and Trade Show. For more information and registration go to: http://www.paturf.org/07wptcts_brochure.htm

**March 21-23**
American Phytopathological Society, Potomac Division Meeting. Blacksburg, Va. For more information go to: http://www.filebox.vt.edu/users/abaudoin/potomac/

**April 18-20, 2007**
VIIth National Stored Product Integrated Pest Management Training Conference will be held at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, OK. For more information go to: http://www.ento.okstate.edu/spipm/

**May 7-9, 2007**
Invasive Arthropod Workshop, Clemson, South Carolina. For more information go to: http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/arthropod/

## Comments or Questions?

If you have any comments or questions regarding any of the material presented, please let us know by sending an e-mail to: jbanieck@wvu.edu. Thank you.