



Newsletter Landscaping and Trails Committee

High Desert Gardening

July (1) 2021

Important Information on Current Pests and Diseases

Kayla Bryant, Yellowstone Maintenance Manager, recently provided the LTC with a list of pest and disease problems she is seeing on plants in common areas of Mirehaven. These include yucca weevils, spider mites, aphids, whiteflies, and leaf spots. You might want to be on the lookout for these common pests when you are out enjoying your yards and gardens.

Yucca Weevil

Sharon M. Douglas

During the June Landscaping and Trails Committee (LTC) meeting, Kayla informed us that the yuccas that have been struggling on Granite Mountain (phase 2) and on Cibolla Creek (phase 3) were infested with yucca weevils, *Sycophorus yuccae*. When the weevils were discovered, they were quickly treated by Yellowstone with an insecticide, and we are hopeful that the remaining yuccas will thrive again. We'd like to thank Kayla and Julie Karl for their quick response to this potentially harmful infestation.



Photos taken by Kayla Bryant of symptomatic *Yucca faxoniana* (top) and crawling yucca weevil (bottom).

Yucca weevils spread by crawling of the adult weevils (they don't have wings so they can't fly) and through infested plant material.

The information provided by this Newsletter is for general information purposes only. All information is researched and compiled in good faith; however, no responsibility is assumed for any problems associated with the use of products or services mentioned in the Newsletter. No endorsement of products or companies is intended, nor is criticism of unnamed products or companies implied. If the reader uses any resource, service, product, or tool ("Resources") mentioned in the Newsletter, the reader agrees to use the Resources responsibly for their intended use and in accordance with laws, regulations, product labels, and generally accepted practices or guidelines. From time to time the Newsletter provides links to other information sources. If the Reader chooses to use these links, then it is at the Reader's own risk and Reader assumes responsibility for any problems associated with using the link or using information contained therein.

If you have yuccas in your yard, especially *Yucca faxoniana*, it is important to treat these plants preventively with products containing the systemic insecticide **imidacloprid**. If you plant a *Y. faxoniana*, it should be treated shortly after it is installed (allow a few weeks for it to start to acclimate to the site before treating). Here is a link to a fact sheet from the University of California that describes this pesky weevil and the damage it can cause:

http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/PLAN_TS/INVERT/yuccaweevil.html

It is suggested that the yuccas be regularly sprayed/drenched with insecticide. Note that this treatment is PREVENTATIVE, not curative. This can be done once a year or as recommended by the product label, depending on what brand and formulation you use. Although this insecticide is prohibited for use in states where you may have lived before, it is okay to use in NM. Imidacloprid is available under many trade names and formulations—and can applied as a foliar spray, as a granular to the soil surface, and as a soil drench. A few of the commonly available products at local big box stores, nurseries, and of course, Amazon, are Bonide Systemic Insect Control (applied as a foliar spray); Monterey Once A Year Insect Control II - Systemic Soil Drench, Bonide Annual Tree & Shrub Care, and Fertilome Tree & Shrub Drench (applied as a soil drench); and Bonide Systemic Granules (applied as granules to the soil). There are many other trade names out there as well. These all have different *rates* and *intervals* for application. It is important to carefully read (and reread) the label to make certain you are doing the application correctly. Before you buy, make certain the label says imidacloprid as the active ingredient. (see sample label below)



Spider Mites

Sharon M. Douglas

Spider mites are very tiny, about 1/50th of an inch long arachnids that are related to insects. Other arachnids include spiders and ticks. They are very difficult to see, and can usually be found on the undersurfaces of leaves. They can also produce webbing over infested leaf surfaces--this webbing gives them the name “spider” mites. Spider mites have a very broad host range of over 200 species of plants, which includes many common ornamentals in Mirehaven. They use piercing-sucking mouthparts to feed on the sap on the underside of leaves and needles. This injury produces tiny white or yellow

spots, giving leaves and needles a stippled or mottled appearance. As feeding becomes more severe, plants look bronzed or bleached and leaves may drop. The presence of webbing can indicate a spider mite infestation. Feeding damage can often be confused with drought stress. Severely infested young plants can be damaged and result in plant death.



Photo: Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org
Damage from spider mite feeding.



Photo: John A. Weidhass, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Bugwood.org
Spider mite adults on undersurface of leaf.



Photo: Clemson University - USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series, Bugwood.org
Webbing from spider mite infestation.

Spider mites can be very difficult to control since they reproduce very rapidly--infestations are particularly common during hot, dry summer weather. Larvae hatch and complete development in 1-2 weeks depending on the temperature. Under high temperatures (>90°F) like we've been

experiencing lately, colonies can reach high numbers in less than two weeks.

Kayla Bryant indicated that Yellowstone treats for spider mites on a recurring basis. Among the pesticides used for mite control are: insecticidal soaps, horticultural oil, diatomaceous earth, and pyrethroids. You need to avoid using horticultural oils when temperatures exceed 90F. You can also try using a high-pressure water spray to dislodge the mites. This also helps to wash away their protective webbing. Spider mites also thrive on plants under stress, so keep plants well-watered, especially during hot, dry conditions. Link to a fact sheet: <https://aces.nmsu.edu/ces/plantclinic/documents/o-08-spidermites.pdf>

Aphids

Sharon M. Douglas

Aphids are small, soft-bodied insects that use their piercing sucking mouthparts to feed on plant sap. They usually occur in colonies on the undersides of tender terminal growth. Heavily-infested leaves can wilt, curl, or turn yellow because of excessive sap removal. Although aphids seldom kill mature plants, the damage they cause and the unsightly fluid waste (called honeydew) they generate rarely warrant control. On many plants, aphids and their honeydew can provide a valuable food source for beneficial insects in the garden. There are many different species of aphids and almost every plant has one or more species that can occasionally feed on it.

When the weather is warm, many species of aphids can develop from newborn nymph to reproducing adult in seven to eight days. Because each adult aphid can produce up to 80 offspring in about a week, aphid populations can increase very quickly. However, large aphid populations often

rapidly decline due to natural biological control or when hot temperatures arrive.



Photo: Jim Baker, North Carolina State University, Bugwood.org
Adult aphids on leaf.



Photo: Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org
Rose flower bud infested with aphids



Photo: Jim Baker, North Carolina State University, Bugwood.org
Crapemyrtle aphid on leaves

Management of aphids can be as simple as a forceful spray of water or water-soap solution, which blasts the aphids from the plant. Other products include fatty acid salts, insecticidal soaps, and horticultural oils. Kayla Bryant recommends only treating roses when infested with aphids. Yellowstone uses a systemic insecticide, but uses a foliar insecticide or oil in tandem with the systemic if the infestation is severe. She reports she has seen successful control using Bayer's 3-in-1 Rose Care, which includes a fertilizer, systemic insecticide, and disease control. Link to a fact sheet: <https://www.nmda.nmsu.edu/wp->

<content/uploads/2016/09/Ornamental-Insects.pdf>

Whiteflies

Sharon M. Douglas

Adult whiteflies are very small, winged insects that resemble small moths and are covered by white waxy powder. They have hair-like, piercing-sucking mouthparts that extract nutrients from plant tissues. Their young form, called nymphs, can typically be seen on the undersides of leaves. They are flat, oval, and somewhat translucent.

The upper surfaces of infested leaves become pale or spotted due to whiteflies feeding on the undersides and extracting chlorophyll. Whiteflies usually feed on the lower surface of their host plant leaves. Much of the damage done by these pests is similar to that of aphids, which are close relatives. Because they are so small, whitefly infestations may go unnoticed until leaves turn yellow and drop unexpectedly, or until an infested plant is disturbed and small clouds of adult whiteflies emerge from it. Heavy infestations can defoliate an entire plant. Additionally, some whitefly species can cause more severe indirect damage by transmitting plant viruses. Whitefly populations often rapidly decline due to natural biological control or heavy downpours.



Photo: Clemson University - USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series , Bugwood.org
Adult whiteflies.



Photo: Bruce Watt, University of Maine, Bugwood.org
Immature whiteflies (nymphs) on undersurface of leaf.



Photo: Henry Juarez, International Potato Center, Bugwood.org.
Feeding damage from whiteflies.

Management of whiteflies is similar to that of aphids. A forceful spray of water or water-soap solution can blast the insects from the plant. You can also try vacuuming whiteflies in the early morning when they are cold and slow moving. This removes adults before they have a chance to lay more eggs. Other products include fatty acid salts, insecticidal soaps, and horticultural oils. Link to a fact sheet:

https://ucanr.edu/sites/VCMG/Controlling_Whiteflies_in_Your_Garden/

Irrigation and Watering-Related Questions:

Many Mirehaven residents have questions about setting up their drip irrigation systems and on watering plant, especially in light of the recent hot, dry conditions. If you have irrigation questions, you can write to AskAnExpert@abcwua.org. Experts promise to do their best to help you find earth-friendly answers to your landscape and irrigation questions. The Water Authority also offers FREE personalized consultations,

using the email listed above on topics related to sustainable, desert-friendly landscaping:

- Plant identification and recommendations
- Planting and irrigating edible landscapes, including vegetable gardens
- The best way to water your trees (new or mature)
- Plant health
- Converting from turf to xeriscape
- Irrigation scheduling and start-up
- Maintaining and repairing broken irrigation systems
- Drip irrigation systems
- Landscape design strategies
- Rainwater harvesting

(<https://www.abcwua.org/2020/10/31/830/>)

Upcoming Educational Opportunities

Virtual Class

Weather the Drought

Register at
<https://www.505outside.com/events/>

Want a desert friendly landscape? In this free online class, Water Authority Conservation experts will show you a three-step plan to make your landscape more resilient and beautiful. Choose either of these dates.

July 1, 12:00-1:00

July 20, 4:30-5:30

Participants who complete the class will receive a \$20 rebate on their bill. One rebate per account.

In Person Classes sponsored by the Xeric Garden Club of Albuquerque:
<http://xericgardenclub.org/calendar.html>

Santa Fe Botanical Garden Tour: Saturday, July 24, 2021, 9am

It began in 1987 as a vision of a small group of local gardeners, botanists, and environmentally oriented citizens to establish a botanical garden in Santa Fe. This garden

has become a valuable resource to the area through educational programs and services to the community.

Taking Care of the Winter Landscape:
Saturday, September 11, 2021, 9am:
Members' meeting; 10am: Presentation

Our speaker, Marisa Thompson, State Horticulturalist and the NMSU Extension Urban Horticulture Specialist, is responsible for active Extension and research programs in sustainable horticulture practices for New Mexicans. Marisa will present Learn how to take care of your trees, shrubs, and perennials in the outdoor landscape during the winter. This is a critical and informative presentation for drought impacted Albuquerque and the importance of maintaining our tree canopy as well as other planting for the health of our environment.