



MSU Diagnostic Services Newsletter

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EXTENSION

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MSU Diagnostic Services
101 Ctr. for Integrated
Plant Systems
East Lansing, MI 48824-
1311
517-355-4536

Diagnostic Services Personnel:

Howard Russell-
Insect/Arthropod
Diagnostician
517-353-9386,
bugman@msu.edu

Jan Byrne-Plant
Pathology Diagnostician
518-355-3504,
byrnejm@msu.edu

Fred Warner-Nematode
Diagnostician
517-432-1333,
fwnemalb@msu.edu

Jackie Smith-Diagnostic
Technician
517-432-0988,
smithjac@msu.edu

Angela Tenney-
Nematode Technician
517-353-8563,
millera3@msu.edu

Shelley Redman-
Accounts Manager
517-353-8624,
bakermi@msu.edu

National Plant Diagnostic Network

In 2002, the National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN) was created by the USDA to enhance agricultural security of crops and plants in agricultural and natural ecosystems in the US. The network consists of five geographic regions with Michigan State serving as the hub for the diagnostic activities in the 8 states in the North Central Region of the NPDN (the "NCPDN"). Through funding provided by USDA, the NPDN has invested in plant diagnostic laboratory infrastructure and training, developed programs to educate first detectors, and enhanced communication among agencies and stakeholders responsible for responding to and mitigating new outbreaks. MSU has benefited through the acquisition of new diagnostic equipment, by participation in a variety of training opportunities, by educating diagnosticians and first detectors, and by providing new means of connecting diagnosticians across the North Central Region and the US. For further information, go to www.NCPDN.org or contact me at hammersr@anr.msu.edu.
Ray Hammerschmidt
Plant Pathology Chair and
Diagnostic Services Faculty
Coordinator

Announcements

Congratulations to Howard Russell, Insect/Arthropod Diagnostician, for winning the Distinguished Academic Staff Award. Howard was described as a first-class ambassador for Michigan State University and a worthy recipient of this outstanding award.



For nearly 30 years, Howard has been the person at MSU identifying and making thousands of recommendations on an amazing range of creatures. He is frequently quoted in local, state, and national media speaking about insects. It is amazing to think how the work of one man can impact so many lives. Help us extend a much deserved congratulations to Howard!

New to the Newsletter

A chance to practice your diagnostic skills in our new section called "Diagnose This." At the end of each issue there will be a photo for you to guess the diagnosis. Please email your answer to pestid@msu.edu; correct responses will be entered into a drawing. The winner will be awarded a free general plant health analysis.



MSU Diagnostic Services Newsletter

A New Publication – Identifying Rust Diseases of Wheat and Barley

A new publication is available to assist in the identification of rust diseases of wheat and barley. The publication includes excellent images and diagnostic tips specific to stem, leaf, and stripe rust diseases. Also included is a discussion of “Ug99”, an emerging and potentially devastating race of stem rust. The publication is a result of a multi-state extension and research committee and has been made available in Michigan by Dr. Janet Lewis, MSU Crop and Soil Science. An electronic copy of the publication can be downloaded from the Diagnostic Services web site. Printed copies are also available upon request; please feel to contact Dr. Lewis at 517-355-0271 ext. 185 for more information.

Notes from the Diagnosticians

Entomology

Howard Russell



Many people have called the lab recently to complain about large clumps of insects crawling about the exterior of their homes. Most

of their descriptions fit boxelder bugs and cluster flies, two insects that congregate on the south and west facing walls of structures during the fall. Many crawled into cracks and crevices around windows, trim molding and soffits looking for a nice protected spot to spend the winter. Apparently many decided to crawl back out to take in some sun as the weather warmed during the past few weeks. Control measures are not needed this time of year since these house guests will be leaving our homes for good over the next few weeks.

Plant Pathology

Jan Byrne



Plugs - keep them in the tray

This is the time of year that greenhouse growers often submit plugs to the diagnostic lab. Getting the plugs to the lab in good condition can be challenging. To preserve the integrity of the plant material, do not remove the plugs from the plug tray. An alternative to submitting an entire plug tray is to cut a section of a tray and fill it with symptomatic plugs. Keeping the plugs in a tray helps protect the roots, and keeps the growing media off the tender foliage. Secondary decay often occurs when soil is allowed to come in contact with the foliage.

A minimum of 10 plugs should be submitted, this gives the diagnosticians ample material for microscopic observation, culturing, and virus testing if necessary.

Nematology

Fred Warner



Don't Forget About Nematodes

If you failed to collect your nematode samples in the fall, spring is here and is also a good time to sample. All plants are susceptible to at least one species of plant-parasitic nematode and sampling is the only method to assess their population densities. To avoid or minimize risk from nematodes, get out and collect those soil samples. It's important to know, or remember, once crops are in the ground there are virtually no control options for plant-parasitic nematodes.

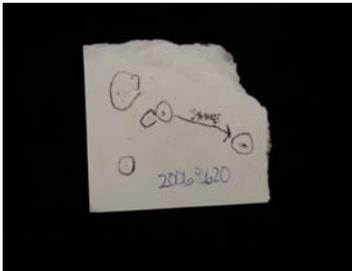


Photo Corner

Improper Sample Submittal



This is an example of nematode samples submitted to us in paper bags. For best results please instruct clients to use plastic.



Insect samples stuck on paper with glue or tape are hard for the diagnostician to identify. It is best to submit insects in sealed containers with alcohol or vinegar.



Concerns about household molds should be directed to the Michigan Department of Community Health Toxics and Health hotline, 1-800-648-6942.

Important Links

Plant and Soil Nutrient Lab
www.css.msu.edu/SPNL/

Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health
www.animalhealth.msu.edu/

National Plant Diagnostic Network
www.NCPDN.org

Michigan Department of Community Health hotline and website: 1-800-648-6942,
www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxics

Crop Advisory Team Alert newsletters
<http://www.ipm.msu.edu/about/cat.htm>

MSU Bulletin Office
<http://web2.msue.msu.edu/bulletins/mainsearch.cfm>

Diagnose This



What is wrong with these carrots? Email your diagnosis to Angie at pestid@msu.edu. The correct answers will be entered into a drawing. The winner will be announced in the next issue of the Diagnostic Newsletter and they will be awarded a free general plant health analysis.