



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
MARATHON COUNTY

Greetings!

I'm not a big fan of bridal wreath spireas normally. They tend to be large and overgrown with time. That said, this year is bridal wreath spirea's year to shine! In central Wisconsin, they look like fireworks, exploding with blooms. Irises have also caught my eye over the last month. I hope the tremendous flowering continues throughout the season.



That said, I'm also nervous 2024 will be the year of diseases. Anthracnose, particularly on maples, has hit the ground running, and I've already had calls for fire blight on ornamental crabapples and powdery mildew on lilacs. My Siberian pea shrubs are already showing signs of powdery mildew, too.

Keep an eye out for diseases over the coming months. You can keep up with diseases across the state with the Wisconsin Disease Almanac under UW Resource Spotlight. Each week, Dr. Brian Hudelson of the Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic posts results of samples turned into the clinic. You can also connect with him and other specialists in our monthly online **Ask the Experts: Garden & Landscape Q&A Series**. The next one is Monday, June 17th, 1-2pm. Scroll to the bottom of the newsletter for more information.

Yours in gardening,
Janell

Calls to the Marathon & Wood Extension Office

I have a large Maple tree in my backyard that is clearly infected with some sort of fungus. We would like to save this tree if at all possible. Can you identify the infection? How can I treat the infection?

Within two days I received two calls with pictures attached of maple leaves with black, angular spots nearly covering the entire leaves. Both pictures tell the same story- anthracnose on maples.

I get nervous when folks come to me with tree disease questions. I always hate giving bad news like, "It's likely you'll need to take the tree down, because it's become a hazard. You're going to want to call a certified arborist". I know how valuable trees can be, both in terms of increasing property value and sentimental appreciation. With calls about anthracnose on old established maples, however, I get to deliver my favorite kind of news- **no need to worry!**

Anthrachnose flourishes when spring conditions are moist, and temperatures are between 50-68F. The good news is if they are established trees, **the disease is cosmetic**, meaning it will not likely affect the overall health of the tree. You can think of it as plant acne. Unsightly, but not a health concern.

How can you prevent anthracnose in the future? The organism that causes anthracnose overwinters on leaf litter and reinfects the tree in the spring. You will reduce the infection next year by doing a good fall clean-up of as many leaves as possible.

If your trees are newly planted, we may need to consider using a fungicide next year to avoid repeat infections. Younger trees can be stressed from repeated anthracnose infections and defoliation. The fungicide is preventative, not curative. You need to apply the fungicide BEFORE you notice the signs of infection. It is too late for fungicides this year.

All in all, the good news is the tree is going to be okay. If it's an established tree, make sure you rake as many leaves as possible this fall to reduce the infection in coming years. I think it's going to be a wet summer, but if we go through dry spells, make sure you water the tree. Ensuring the tree receives one inch of water per week will reduce the overall stress of the tree. Other than that, nothing to worry about!

If it's a newly planted tree, and if it is severely defoliated this year, you may want to consider applying a fungicide early, before the symptoms occur next spring. This fall, make sure you rake as many leaves as possible.

Chenille Plant, *Acalypha hispida*

This interesting plant gets its common name from the exotic flowers that look like strands of chenille yarn. Other descriptive common names include Foxtails, Monkey Tail and Red-hot Cat's Tail.

Chenille Plant

Mulches for Home Gardens and Plantings

Boost your garden's production with mulches. This publication shows when to use organic mulches, like bark or leaves, and synthetic mulches, like plastic sheets, and teaches how to apply them.

Mulches for Home Gardens and Plantings

Fire Blight

Fire blight is the most destructive bacterial disease affecting plants in the rose family, including apple, pear, and crabapple. Blossoms, leaves, twigs, and branches of plants affected by fire blight can turn dark brown to black, giving the appearance of having been scorched in a fire.

Fire Blight

Podcast

This month's audio delights come to us from **Garden Talk with Larry Meiller: How to keep gardening as you age.**

There are many ways to adjust your gardening experience as you get older. Larry talks with horticulturist Mark Dwyer about ways to continue to enjoy your hobby even with physical limitations. We also talk about gardening with hummingbirds in mind.

[Garden Tool Recommendations](#)

Podcast

UW Resource Spotlight

Wisconsin Disease Almanac 2024

Weekly summaries of diseases that have been diagnosed at the Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic in 2024.

WI Disease Almanac

Citizen Science

Wisconsin Odonata Survey (damselflies & dragonflies)

The Wisconsin Odonata Survey (WOS) documents populations of dragonflies and damselflies. We're learning where the 160+ species of damselflies and dragonflies may be found and their required habitats. Citizen volunteers are greatly appreciated because there are far too many habitats to check for the few professionals who work with Odonata. June and July are "prime time" for odonates, so your most intense efforts should be concentrated then.

Ready to get involved?

WI Odonata Survey

Upcoming Programs

[Click here for more information, including registration](#)

Local (Marathon & Wood County) Programs In Person

Join me locally for these learning opportunities!

Planting for Pollinators

Did you know that pollinators are responsible for 1 in 3 bites of food that we eat? Pollinator decline is a serious problem and habitat loss is one of the major causes. The good news is each of us has a role mitigating pollinator decline. This program covers how to grow pollinator loving plants, including matching cultivars to the site so they not only survive, but thrive! We'll talk about pest management and resources. We'll also learn about more ways to help through citizen science activities.

Thurs. June 13th 10am & 6pm MCPL- Wausau Branch (library)

Wed. June 19th 1pm Woodson YMCA-The Landing

Wed. June 19th 5:30pm MCPL- Marathon City (library)

Pollinators Family Night- All about Wisconsin Bees!

Most bees in Wisconsin live in colonies in hives, right? Wrong! Come and learn about the approximately 400 species of bees living in Wisconsin that never come close to a hive. So where do they live? You'd be surprised! Wood County Master Gardeners talk about native bees and what we can do to help them thrive. As a bonus, each family will be able to build and take home a bee house for their yard.

Wed. June 26th 6pm Everett Roehl Marshfield Public Library

Virtual opportunities for programs!

Can't make it in person? There's other ways to tap into Extension programs!

Ask the Experts: A monthly garden and landscape Q&A Series

Join our monthly online programs in 2024 for an opportunity to connect with plant health experts from the UW-Madison Division of Extension. Each session, held on Monday afternoons from 1:00-2:00 pm, is your chance to ask questions about your trees and shrubs, garden vegetables and ornamentals, and lawn. Whether it's about plant diseases, pesky insects, or the selection and general care of plants in and around your home, our panel of seasoned experts will provide you with insightful answers. Don't miss out on this opportunity to cultivate your knowledge and keep your plants thriving.

Mon. June 17th 1-2pm

The Pollination of Native Plants

Presented by Heather Holm, The Pollination of Native Plants is a fascinating journey showcasing the development of different flower types and the presentation of floral resources to pollinators. Exploring the types of insect pollinators, their foraging behavior, and the floral features that attract pollinators, Holm provides many specific examples of how native plants are pollinated and what pollinator is most effective and why.

Tue. June 18th 6:30-8pm

The balancing act in the home garden: Protecting pollinators while managing pests

Join us for an overview of integrating pollinator protection with pest management in your home landscape. We'll cover the fundamentals of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), pesticide labels, differences between systemic and contact pesticides, and discuss the toxicity of common products or ingredients to pollinators. By the end of this program, you'll be

prepared with strategies for simultaneously prioritizing pollinator protection and pest control in your own backyard.

Wed. June 19th Noon-1pm

Plant Diseases in History

Learn about how plant diseases have impacted human history and how plant diseases continue to be important in our daily lives and in pop culture.

Wed. June 26th 6:30-8:30pm

[Click here for more information, including registration](#)

UW-Madison Extension Events

Stay up to date with virtual and in person programming across Wisconsin on our [Events Calendar](#).



Janell Wehr

Horticulture
Educator

An EEO/AA employer, Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requirements.



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