Anthracnose Affects Area White Oaks

If you drive across Jefferson County, you may notice many white oaks that have brown leaves and look to be in poor condition. Wet spring weather has resulted in the development of the fungus disease anthracnose on many Jefferson County white oaks.

The anthracnose fungus affects many different kinds of trees as well as other plants; however, the fungi have very specific host associations. For instance, maple anthracnose is not the same disease as oak anthracnose. In oaks, specifically white oaks, small dark brown lesions develop in the spring and early summer during wet and humid weather. These lesions often merge to give the leaves a ragged, dead appearance. Leaves may fall prematurely.

The anthracnose fungi overwinter in leaf litter and on dead branches. Spores are spread by wind and rain in early spring and summer and affect leaves and shoots. While the damage to white oaks appears to be severe, don’t worry. Most oaks will recover by mid-June when the weather gets drier and warmer. Healthy trees can be expected to survive anthracnose with little affect on the long term health of the tree. However, trees under stress or that are in decline, may show decreased vigor. One of the major causes of death in oaks is oak decline. Oak decline is the accumulation of stresses over time that results in the death of a tree. It is a little like aging in people. Anthracnose can be one of those stresses that can contribute to oak decline.

There are very few management practices that will control anthracnose in white oaks. Raking and removing dead leaves and pruning dead branches can reduce sources of inoculums for next year. While fungicides are available that control anthracnose, treating large trees is probably not economical or practical. Also, timing is very difficult as the fungicide must be applied prior to infection. Since infection depends on specific weather and temperature conditions, determining when to treat is nearly impossible. Finally, if you have a very young or stressed white oak affected by anthracnose, be sure to water the tree during dry weather. Applications of fertilizer on the drip line may also be beneficial. For more information, contact the Jefferson County Extension Center at 636-797-5391 or at wilsondw@missouri.edu.

Largest Vegetable/Fruit Contest at the Jefferson County Fair

Do you raise the biggest tomatoes in your neighborhood? Then you will want to enter them into the largest vegetable contest at the Jefferson County Fair 2010, July 22nd - 25th, in Hillsboro. This is the 3rd year for the largest vegetable or fruit contest at the Jefferson County Fair. Entries must be grown and cared for by the owner. Most any vegetable or fruit from sweet corn, tomatoes, cucumbers or even blackberries can be entered. Judges will weigh and measure the vegetables to determine the largest. The winners in each category will receive premiums and ribbons.

(continued on page 3)
Jumping Oak Gall

Robert E. Thomas  
Information Specialist  
573-882-2480  
ThomasR@missouri.edu

Published: Thursday, June 24, 2010  
Story Source: Christopher Starbuck,  
573-882-9630

Oak galls seen across the state; Unsightly infestations seldom fatal to trees
COLUMBIA, Mo. - 2010 may go down as the year of the oak gall, said a University of Missouri Extension horticulturist. MU Extension centers have been deluged with questions about two different oak gall pests, said Chris Starbuck. "Many people are curious about what is causing golf-ball-sized 'tumors' on branches of their pin oak trees. Others wonder why the leaves of their white oaks are turning brown. In either case, it is a tiny wasp," he said. The good news is that oak galls are seldom fatal to trees.

Pin oak galls
Pin oak galls are caused by certain species of wasp that lay eggs on twigs. These young branches swell as the larvae hatch and mature, which can take a couple years. Galls can grow as large as 3 inches in diameter before adults emerge to make more galls on the leaves. Adults emerging from the leaf galls then go on to make more twig galls, and the cycle continues.

Two types of gall commonly affect pin oaks, caused by two closely related wasp species. In "horned oak gall," spiky projections protrude from the gall. "Gouty oak galls" lack these projections.

"Generally, even a heavy infestation of gouty or horned oak gall does not kill trees," Starbuck said. "Over time, however, with increasing branch dieback, trees become unsightly. Unfortunately, there are no control methods that have proven very effective on controlling this pest on large trees."

Certain insecticide treatments can reduce the leaf gall stage, but they also tend to kill off most of the predators and parasites that help control the wasp population. Long-term studies indicate that even treatment with systemic insecticides for several years can't eliminate the problem.

Jumping oak galls
The galls leading to browning of leaves on white oaks are the work of the tiny "jumping oak gall wasp." In this case, the galls are only pinhead-sized, but there are hundreds of them on the underside of a single leaf. The button-like galls eventually drop to the ground, leaving a pockmark on the leaves. Badly infested leaves unusually turn brown and may even fall off.

The galls are called jumping galls because, similar to Mexican jumping beans, each one contains an acrobatic larva that causes the fallen gall to appear to jump. This allows the galls to work farther into the litter under the trees, where larvae are sheltered from adverse conditions.

Prolonged snow cover, such as seen last winter, may provide additional protection to the larvae, leading to the current population explosion people are seeing now, Starbuck said.

As with pin oak galls, jumping oak galls almost never cause tree death. Natural enemies drastically reduce the population of this pest after a year or two, so control measures are unnecessary.

Raking and burning fallen leaves may help reduce infestation the following year.

"Although horned, gouty and jumping galls cause dramatic symptoms, they are not fatal," he said. "Keep in mind that such pests usually go through population fluctuations due to natural enemy buildup and climatic conditions."
Jefferson County Cattlemen's BIGGEST Problem!

I've been putting off writing about this because some of my best friends are going to think I'm writing about them! And please don't think that I'm trying to be a smart aleck or a know it all or act important. But there is one problem that many Jefferson County cattlemen have that severely affects their operation. I see it with cattlemen that own two cows and with cattlemen who have 100 cows. The problem is no or poor cattle working facilities. Every proven management practice that I can think of begins with good working facilities. Think about it. Castrating bull calves, preg testing cows, vaccinating and worming cows and calves, treating a sore foot or a pinkeye, all require a working chute, pens and a way to get the cattle into them. And the ones listed above are just the basics. That's not to mention more technical practices like estrus synchronization, artificial insemination, bull soundness exams, tract scoring and pelvic measuring for heifers, ultra sound pregnancy and carcass testing and fetal sexing.

Cattle working facilities need not be expensive, just safe for the cattle and the cattleman. (Believe me, I understand about safe for the cattleman!) It is really not fair to the cattle to have dangerous working facilities! The first step in good working facilities is a series of pens or small pastures so that you can get the cattle to the area. Spend some time thinking about how you will get the cattle from the pasture to the facility. The facility should consist of a crowding pen or tub, a working alley and head catch or chute. As the old saying goes, “there are lots of ways to skin a cat”, so one design will not necessarily work for everyone in every location. Here are some general suggestions to help you design your working facilities:

1) Alleys should be curved if possible since cattle’s natural instinct is to circle.
2) Solid sides on the crowd gate and alley will block the cow’s vision of distractions.
3) The alley and chute should be 18” at the bottom and about 30” wide at the top for cow/calf operations.
4) Height of alleys should be 60” for tame cattle and 72” for range or wild cattle or my cattle!

One of the big drawbacks is the cost of a working chute with head catch. We have plans for chutes and head gates here at the Extension Center if you are handy and would like to build your own. We also have plans for complete working facilities. I know lots of people who really want to improve their herds, but poor working facilities are holding them back. I’ve spent a lot of time dragging up old gates and building makeshift pens and trying to work cattle. Usually, some of the cattle got away and all you had to show for were the bruises! Think about it. And for those of you that think I wrote this about you, it is probably your neighbor that I was thinking of!

Largest Vegetable/Fruit Contest at the Jefferson County Fair

And while you are at it, why not enter an exhibit into the home economics, arts and crafts and photography competition? Judges will give ribbons to the best of each class. Of course, there are classes for all kinds of homegrown fruits and vegetables as well as canned goods and jellies. If cooking is not your thing, then you might try entering a quilt, afghan or any clothing item which you have made.

Maybe you have an artistic touch. Enter a painting, photograph, craft item or flower display; or perhaps a rose that you grow on your own patio. Do you like scrapbooking? Enter you scrapbook and maybe you will receive a blue ribbon.

The categories are nearly endless! Share your green thumb, artistic flair, or baking talent by entering the Jefferson County Fair 2010 Home Economics, Arts and Crafts and Photography contest. And don’t forget about entering that really big tomato! Entry times will be on Wednesday, July 21st, from 3:00 to 8:00 p.m. and on Thursday, July 22nd, between 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. at the Hillsboro Civic Center building on the fairgrounds.

For an entry form or more information, call the Extension Center at (636) 797-5391. This event is sponsored by the Hillsboro Community Civic Club, the Jefferson County 4-H Council and the University of Missouri Extension.
George Threw a Party!

Perhaps the most unique watershed in Jefferson County is the Sandy Creek watershed. It has sandy soil, hence the creek’s name, steep slopes, some very fertile farmland, subdivisions and a college in its boundary. Yet for some of the residents along the creek, one event has apparently changed Sandy Creek, the construction of new Highway 21. Residents along Sandy Creek believe that since the new Highway 21 has been built, there have been more storm water issues along Sandy Creek. The result appears to be extreme stream bank erosion issues in many places along the creek. Statistics would seem to bear that out. NRCS has calculated that 178 acres of concrete surface has been added to the Sandy watershed. I was surprised to learn that the Sandy watershed is composed of between 13,000 and 16,000 acres, depending on where you actually draw the line.

George Engelbach and I have been good friends for a long time. George lives on the Sandy Creek and he decided that government agencies should know the effect of road construction on the farms and landowners downstream. George is the chairman of the Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District. Don’t get it wrong; George wasn’t looking for handouts or cost-share money, but rather wanted people to be aware of the consequences of construction on storm water. George arranged a meeting of representatives of the Soil and Water Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service, including their state conservationist, Missouri Department of Conservation, US Army Corp of Engineers, Missouri Department of Agriculture, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Ameren-UE, and the Jefferson County Storm Water Department. Also present were several local landowners. In all, there were over 20 people present. George showed a deep gouge in the creek bank that was taking out part of his field. He explained that the erosion of the Sandy Creek had increased markedly since the construction of new Highway 21. Several in attendance were engineers and they as well as MDC specialists offered opinions. However, the best answer came from Bill Aho of the Jefferson County Storm Water Department. Bill explained how a citizens group had been formed to look at the Sandy Creek watershed. By looking at the entire watershed as a whole, efforts can be made to address causes, rather than just repair the damage done. This group, with the help of the Storm Water staff, was assessing the critical areas and concerns of the watershed. The Storm Water Department had helped them receive a grant for $10,000 to work on the project. After an assessment is completed, the group will set goals for water quality and storm water control for the Sandy Creek watershed. Eventually, a plan will be written suggesting practices in construction as well as management that will address erosion, storm water and water quality issues. This watershed plan will be written to specifications from the Department of Natural Resources. DNR requires nine elements in the plan to insure that the plan comes from the people and that it is written to address the problems. After completion, the group may be eligible for cost-share or grant funding to help fix some of the critical issues.

Everyone agreed that an effective watershed plan was the best method to combat the stream bank erosion on Sandy Creek. Hats off to the local watershed planning group and to our Jefferson County Storm Water Department for providing leadership. If you live in the Sandy Creek watershed and would like to help, call the Jefferson County Storm Water Department at 797-6228. Also, thanks to George for setting up this very informative event.
University Extension will be teaching a canning workshop on July 20 - if you're interested in attending - call the Extension office for more information. (636) 797-5391

Friday, July 23
Small Animal Show - 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, July 24
Dairy Cattle Show - 8:00 a.m
Beef Breeding Show - After Dairy Show
Beef Steer Show - After Breeding Show
Market Hog Show - After Breeding Show
Bucket Calves Show - After Market Hog Show
4-H Livestock Sale - 7:00 p.m.

4-H and HOME EC EXHIBITS
Exhibits will be on display in the Civic Center Building beginning Thursday night, July 22, 2010, at 5:00 p.m. through Sunday, July 25, 2010.

KID’S DAY sponsored by the Hillsboro Civic Club and Jefferson County 4-H will be held on Sunday, July 25, 2010, beginning at 2:00 p.m.
The U.S. Supreme Court recently lifted the ban on Roundup Ready alfalfa. A lower court had placed the ban in 2007. Monsanto and Forage Genetics International who originated Roundup Ready alfalfa still need to complete an environmental impact statement, EIS. Evidently the EIS is nearing completion and USDA is hoping to release the alfalfa for planting by the spring of 2011.

Want to learn more about growing blackberries or raspberries or blueberries? Come to the growers meeting on Tuesday, August 17th, at 6:30 pm at the St. Andrews United Methodist Church, 1004 Rock Road in De Soto. Katie Kammler will give a presentation on berry production and tentatively, there will be a commercial blueberry producer to share their experiences. Everyone is welcome and the class is free.

Lincoln University is advertising for a Farm Outreach Worker for Jefferson and Washington Counties. This person will assist small farmers in setting goals and guide them to achieving them. The outreach worker will work out of their home. Go to www.lincolnu.edu/pages/110.asp?PositionID=555 for details.

One of the best stories of the year comes from a good friend of mine, Mike Luebers. Mike is a good mechanic and works a lot on farm equipment. He was working on a chain round baler that had been sitting for a while. When he opened up the back, he found two copperheads coiled up inside. Mike got rid of the snakes, climbed into the baler, and went to work repairing a bar on the chain. As he was grinding on the chain with an electric angle head grinder, he felt something moving down near his pants pocket. Fearing that he had found another snake, he dropped the grinder and fought to get out of the baler. The grinder flopped around inside the baler until it cut the electric cord. After finally getting out of the baler, he realized that the moving object in his pocket was actually his cell phone which had somehow been switched from the ring tone to vibrate! He picked up the phone and threw it as far as he could!