



**August 27, 2010**

**From:** Stanton Gill, Extension Specialist – IPM for Greenhouse and Nurseries, CMREC, University of Maryland Extension  
Karen Rane, Extension Specialist, Director of the Plant Diagnostic Clinic, University of Maryland Extension  
Suzanne Klick, Technician, CMREC, University of Maryland Extension

### **Margined Blister Beetles**

Moira Parker, MNCPPC, is reporting that they had a swarm of margined blister beetles do quite a bit of damage on their cestrums. There were only about 10 cestrums in 5 gallon pots and most of the damage was on two plants. On one, about 50% of the leaves were eaten and about 30% on the other. She noted that it seemed to happen overnight. Do not handle blister beetles. This beetle produces cantharadin which causes blisters when it makes contact with the skin. Blister beetles are also highly toxic to animals, especially horses.

**Control:** Fortunately even though they tend to swarm into an area, blister beetles only hang around for a week or so before moving on. If their damage is intolerable then most synthetic pyrethroids will provide control.



**Margined blister beetle damage and an adult**  
Photos by Moira Parker

### **Root Rots**

We are now into the rainy and humid period of the summer. Chrysanthemum growers need to check their soluble salt levels regularly. If you used controlled release fertilizer, check and make sure it did not “dump” all of the nutrient during the hot periods we just went through. Your soluble salt level should be 1.0 – 1.2 millimohs. Mums are pretty tolerant of high salts and some people were applying 400 – 600 ppm of nitrogen last season to force growth, but in hot humid weather you can injure rots and set yourself up for root rots. Be sure to pull plants out of pots to check for root rot problems regularly.

### Caterpillars on Cabbage and Kale

The imported cabbage butterfly, the cabbage looper and the cross striped caterpillars are all active in late August. Many growers are applying granular formulations of Acephate (Precise) to substrate. This systemic does give long term (about 4 – 6 weeks) control of many of the foliar feeding caterpillars that attack ornamental cabbage and kale.

### Pyralid Caterpillars Attacking Mums

We received samples from Southern Maryland and two locations in central Maryland of mums with a pyralid caterpillar feeding on the inner growth of the plant. They were very hard to detect but once you see them and your eye is trained on the problem then it is easier to pick them up on the foliage. I have some of the larvae in our lab and a couple of pupae and we will be rearing them out for identification.

**Control:** Meanwhile Bt, Conserve, Pylon (in greenhouse only), and Acephate should all control this caterpillar. Just make sure the spray penetrates into the interior of the plant to get at these somewhat cryptic caterpillars.

### Other Caterpillars on Mums

Saltmarsh caterpillars and yellowstriped armyworms are also feeding on mums this week. Early instar saltmarsh caterpillars do not feed through the leaf so look for thin, brown areas on foliage. Later stages of this caterpillar will eat holes in the leaves.

**Control:** Bt, Conserve, or Pylon (in greenhouse only), as well as Acephate should all control this caterpillar.



**Saltmarsh damage on mums**  
Photo by Shannon Wadkins



**Saltmarsh caterpillar found on fern**



**Yellowstriped armyworm found on mums**

### Caterpillar on Angelonia

The common buckeye caterpillar has been reported feeding on Angelonia this week. Other plant hosts for this caterpillar include snapdragon, toadflax and plantains.



Common buckeye butterfly (left) and caterpillars (right) on Angelonia  
Photos by Shannon Wadkins

### Grasshoppers on Ornamental Plants

Grasshoppers are feeding on ornamental plants such as mums and zinnias this week. Look for chewing damage on the foliage.

**Control:** Acephate and synthetic pyrethroids can be used.



### Milkweed Bugs

We are finding milkweed bugs on swamp milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*, on landscape plants in Ellicott City this week. Milkweed bugs can also be a problem on *Asclepias* species grown as cut flowers.

**Control:** If necessary, Acephate (Orthene) or a synthetic pyrethroid.



Milkweed bug nymphs (left) and adult (right)

## **Bandedwinged Whitefly**

John Speaker is reporting a lot of activity of bandedwinged whitefly on ornamental cabbage and kale. He noted he is not seeing as much activity on the varieties with dissected leaves. The adult bandedwinged whitefly is white with two wavy bands on the wings. The early instar nymphs look a lot like greenhouse whitefly. In the last instar the nymphs have a distinct black line running down the middle of the back (**photo**). Look on the undersides of the foliage for the nymphs. Recently, we were at a perennial nursery and they had this same insect species on hibiscus. Bandedwinged whitefly builds up, in most years, around August to September.



## **September 15, 2010 MGGA & MAEF Scholarship Golf Tournament**

### **Contact:**

Brett Karp, VP- MGGA,  
at 301-830-1474, Brett.karp@syngenta.com  
about playing or being a sponsor

### **November 30, 2010**

Green Industry Energy Program

Location: To be determined

Contact: Suzanne Klick, 301-596-9413

### **December 17, 2010**

Pest Management Conference

Location: Howard Community College, Columbia, MD

Contact: Suzanne Klick, 301-596-9413

### **February 10 – 11, 2011**

Chesapeake Green 2011 Horticultural Symposium

Location: Maritime Institute, Linthicum, MD

Contact: 410-823-8684

---

The information given herein is supplied with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by University of Maryland Extension is implied.

Read labels carefully before applying any pesticides.

---

Photographs are by Suzanne Klick and Stanton Gill unless stated otherwise.

---

University of Maryland Extension programs are open to all citizens without regard to race, color, gender, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, or national origin.