

Ask A MG Plant Clinic Training Questions & Answers

Questions for Dave:

1. Are Inkberry susceptible to poor drainage like the yew?
 - a. Yes
2. If we watch the forecast can we take measures to prevent cold damage on plants?
 - a. *If plants are in the ground, it is harder because you cannot move them in and out. If they're outside, cover them to protect them. Prune out cold damage.*
3. Does Appalachian Spring dogwood get elsinoe spot anthracnose?
 - a. *Yes, it does.*
4. Is that native pachysandra?
 - a. *No, but you will still see the disease on the native species as well.*
5. Are you seeing an increase in aster yellow disease? Esp on coneflowers and asters? Do you need to take extreme measures to get rid of aster yellow?
 - a. *People are planting more Echinacea and Rudbeckia, and they get aster yellow. There is more opportunity to see aster yellow now. Be sure to watch your plants that are susceptible. Prune it out or remove those plants. It is an insect-borne disease.*
 - b. *Can't prevent it because it comes with insects. Prune it off quickly.*
6. What do you recommend to treat Black Spot on Roses?
 - a. *Lots of fungicides are available and effective. Copper is effective. You need to treat every week to ten days any roses that are susceptible. Maryland temperatures and humidity are ideal conditions for black spot.*
7. On rose rosette - can you just cut it out or will the plant eventually die? How do you treat this?
 - a. *Most of the time it cannot be pruned out, and you have to remove the plant because the disease goes down to the roots. Replant with a healthy plant.*
8. If hydrangea roots are cut or damaged in replacing a sidewalk can they be helped to recuperate? How far back should hydrangeas be cut back to remove frost damage?
 - a. *Remove the frost damage back to living tissue. This could affect blooms depending on what species you have.*
 - b. *In general, hydrangeas are vigorous so root systems should recover.*
9. I have read that you can water the night before a cold night, and it helps to prevent some damage. Is that true?
 - a. *That only works if you have a mist or sprinkler system or something that is consistently irrigating allowing water to drip off the leaves*
10. It appears that there is a lot of maple tree die off along the local roads between Frederick and western Maryland. Have you noticed that die off?
 - a. *It might be a frost area. Even regular maples are showing frost damage. The weather has been nice enough for anthracnose to develop.*
11. My boxwood hedge has brown leaves that go across the plants at the same level like a horizontal line. wonder if frost damage
 - a. *Most likely this is cold damage.*
12. Can a Camellia bush get rose rosette virus?
 - a. *No*
13. What about yellowing on leaves of mature Rhododendron...blooms continue to be great
 - a. *Going through a period now where they are replacing older foliage which naturally declines. It has been accelerated by the cooler weather. Still should see good blooms and new foliage.*
14. Do you recommend treating leaf spot on sweet bay magnolias?
 - a. *Generally not. If it's on older leaves that are beginning to yellow and drop, just let it go and monitor the plant.*
15. What to do about frost damage on Crepe Myrtle

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- a. Prune the damage back. Some cold damage could also be herbicide damage. Most crepe myrtles bloom on new wood.*
16. How to manage black knot on plums? Any plums that are resistant?
 - a. Prune it out. There are likely cultivars that are resistant.*
17. My serviceberry fruit has some sort of fungal growth on them, what to do if anything?
 - a. It is likely rust, like what appears on crabapples and pears. If you harvest the fruits, you will have to spray. When you see growths on Juniper, it is time to spray.*
18. My peony appears to be showing signs of rose rosette as leaves are stunted and deformed - what could be the problem?
 - a. Peonies get their own set of viruses, but usually you can prune the infected part out. It is not rose rosette.*
19. I was gifted with a red bud volunteer from my friend's farm. The leaves were drooping severely when the tree was brought to me. I planted it immediately. Leaves are still drooping after 4 days. What can I do to ensure the tree's survival?
 - a. If the first set of foliage has fallen off, it will be stressed. But keep it watered, let it establish, and see if it puts out a new set of leaves.*
20. A mature inkberry has some spidery webbing and brown leaves - others are ok. Will increased air circulation remedy this
 - a. Yes, better air circulation can help. There also could be regular spiders, or Psocids (Book Lice), no fungus forms spider webs. Prune and thin the inkberries. Make sure they are in well-drained areas.*

Questions for Luke:

1. How does mugwort spread - how best to remove or treat it?
 - a. Perennial. Can be difficult to control by hand-pulling. Try a thick layer of mulch or potentially using herbicide.*
2. Best way to reduce Mulberry weed (*Fatoua villosa*)?
 - a. You can smother mulberry weed with black plastic, a weed barrier, or layers of newspapers covered with mulch. Mulch can help suppress seed germination*
 - b. <https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/mulberry-weed>*
3. Can you recommend a good groundcover for hot sun to prevent weeds?
 - a. Low-growing junipers*
4. Luke, do you have a suggestion for poison ivy? It seems to be worse than usual this year.
 - a. Remove it if it is growing up trees. Wear gloves and be careful! Find someone who is not sensitive to it to help you if you are sensitive. Systemic broadleaf herbicides are effective.*
5. Please share a safe way to dispose of poison ivy - I hear even the fumes from burning it are toxic
 - a. Do NOT burn it. Put it in a closed bag where you will not be touching it again.*
6. Luke do you have a suggestion for English ivy that has taken over a small wooded area?
 - a. Hand removal combined with herbicides. Late summer and fall is a good time to use herbicides to control it.*
7. Does aerating soil bring up/increase weeds?
 - a. Yes, aerating soil (turf) can bring up weed seeds because it brings up soil to the surface. In another wise healthy, thick turf I don't think this would be a significant source of weeds, though because they would have a lot of competition from the established grasses.*
8. How can you tell the difference between Fleabane (*Erigeron annuus*) and Robin's Plantain (*Erigeron pulchellus*)
 - a. They are very similar-looking species. If I had a copy of Weeds of the Northeast with me (it's in my office), I would reference that. The pages below are profiles for the two plants.*

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- b. <https://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=ERAN>
 - c. <https://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=ERPU>
 - d. <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/erigeron/>
 - e. <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/erigeron-pulchellus/>
9. Are the berries poisonous to humans? Or is that an old wives tale?
 - a. *The berries, and really all parts, of pokeweed are toxic.*
 - b. <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/phytolacca-americana/common-name/common-pokeweed/>
 10. Are any of the plantains native?
 - a. *Yes, paleseed plantain is native to much of the US, but I don't believe that it is as common in landscapes as buckhorn or common plantains.*
 - b. <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/plantago-virginica/>
 11. Anyone have experience or knowledge if devices that emit ultraviolet light are effective for weed control?
 - a. *Looking right now on the web, I see that there is a Danish company that has a product that does that. I do not know of one that is on the market in the US. I can see it being safer than a flame weeder. The drawback would be that it only kills the above-ground portion of the plan*
 12. My lawn is full of wild violet. They are hard to pull. What is the best way to control them?
 - a. *Yes, wild violet is a perennial weed that can be very difficult to control by hand weeding if you have a large patch. They are resistant to broadleaf herbicides like 2,4-D, dicamba and MCPP, but a combination of 2,4-D and triclopyr may give you some control. If your area of lawn is very full of violet or other weeds (over half is weeds), you may be better off waiting until late summer, killing off the entire patch with a non-selective herbicide (like glyphosate) and renovating and reseeding that area. Take a soil test to make sure your pH is where it should be for turf (around 6.5) and follow the guidelines on fertilizer applications as well as mowing height.*
 - b. <https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/wild-violet>
 - c. https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/images/programs/hgic/Publications/non_HGIC_FS/TT%2046%20Perennial%20grass%20weeds.pdf
 13. What is the best way to deal with nutsedge weed?
 - a. *Nutsedge can be a very persistent perennial landscape weed. Best management approaches depend on the location. In landscape beds or turf you can pull small clumps by hand or use chemical controls with larger patches. See the HGIC page below:*
 - b. <https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/yellow-nutsedge>
 14. I have a weed with a small white bulb. very difficult to hand pull. what is it? How can I eradicate it?
 - a. *I can't say for sure how to control without more information. For hard to pull bulbs, waiting until the soil is moist certainly increases the chances of getting more of the plant out of the ground. Check out the HGIC page on weeds to see if you can ID it or submit a photo thru Ask an Expert.*
 - b. <https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/weed-identification-photos>
 15. What is best mulch to use in gardens
 - a. *Arborist wood chip mulch is a great mulch to use, especially in landscape beds. Aside from that, a coarse wood chip mulch (bagged or bulk) is generally the best.*
 - b. <http://pubs.cahnrs.wsu.edu/publications/pubs/fs160e/>
 16. Would leaf mulch also work for weed suppression? Then the native bees can still emerge!
 - a. *Leaf mulch does provide some weed suppression and is better than bare soil. If you have areas in mulch and in turf, ground-nesting bees should still be able to access soil in the turf areas.*
 17. Any suggestions to get rid of running bamboo? Do herbicides need to be used each year to prevent bamboo?
 - a. *Bamboo usually is best controlled with a combination of physical removal and herbicide application. This time of year, you can remove new shoots as they pop up. You can cut down*

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stands of bamboo now and then cut back major regrowth throughout the summer. Late summer and fall are ideal times to apply a non-selective herbicide to the remaining leafy regrowth. You may need to repeat the process the following year to eliminate the patch.

- b. <https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/bamboo>

Questions for Mary Kay:

1. I have a blueberry bush with dead branches with dead leaves and spider looking webbing with a bug that first looks kind of like a spider but then appears to turn into a small fly. what is this problem and how to solve it
 - a. *The*
2. Is there a chart/list/reference that links plant, time of year, insect? for common insects on vegetables, for common insects on perennials, shrubs and trees?
 - a. *Depends on the insect you are looking for*
 - b. *HGIC Pest predictive calendar: [Pest Predictive Calendar-Landscape/Nursery](#)*
3. Are there any programs to monitor tree of heaven?
 - a. *MD Department of Agriculture is looking for it as is the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. They are looking for SLF egg masses on these trees, which can be up to 30-40ft. up the tree. They are working with railroad lines to try and get them to control tree of heaven along railway lines. You can report your Tree of Heaven stands to MDA at DontBug.MD@maryland.gov*
4. Is there a key or chart that helps identify the different stages of insects?
 - a. *Depends on the insect you are looking for*
5. Are there any predators that go after the (spotted lantern fly) nymphs?
 - a. *Yes: spiders, wheel bugs, assassin bugs. They just have not caught up with the infestation numbers.*
6. Regarding the maps showing spotted lantern fly presence, what numbers are considered an infestation?
 - a. *If it is a reproducing population, they will monitor it for a year or two*
7. Are we encouraging a particular IPM insect to help deal with the Lantern Fly?
 - a. *Any of the predators. The USDA has parasites in quarantine right now that they are researching. The populations of SLF in each area are different populations. They're trying to find out where they came from to match them up with the correct parasite.*
8. If the SLF is discovered on a property, how are they being dealt with? Who is monitoring woodland acreage or vacant properties? Are homeowners liable?
 - a. *Homeowners are not liable, but if you find them, report them to MDA at (410) 841-5920 or DontBug.MD@maryland.gov as soon as possible*
9. How to neutralize the Spot lantern fly eggs?
 - a. *Take a picture of them first. Smash them with a rock.*
10. Is there anything, nontoxic, that we can spray on the eggs?
 - a. *Oils do not work well. It's best to note where they were located, then scrape them off into a container.*
 - b. [Check Penn State for more info!](#)
11. I have seen a green bug with 6 spots on its back in my garden - what is this bug and is it beneficial?
 - a. *Submit the photo to Ask An Expert*
12. Any news about Viburnum beetle?
 - a. *Has spread all over. If you have a susceptible variety of viburnum, treat it and watch out for it.*
 - b. [Cornell Viburnum Leaf Beetle page](#)

Questions for Jon:

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1. 1. How do you manage onion maggots?
2. a. *They like to lay eggs in manure and soils that are high in organic matter. Discontinue use of manure. Rotate allium locations. Try using row covers.*
3. 2. Would you have to remove grass to put down barriers for raised beds.
4. a. *No, you do not have to. Smothering turf with landscape fabric or cardboard is effective. You can also mow the turf very low, put the raised bed over it and fill with soil or growing mix. The turf will decompose naturally.*
5. 3. Are there guidelines for planting seeds in the “milk container type greenhouse?”
6. a. *VA Tech has great content on Winter Sowing. They show how to cut milk jugs with a hinge to use to start seeds-*
7. <https://fairfaxgardening.org/winter-sowing/>
8. https://afac.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SeasonExtension_CentralLibGardenTalk-2018.pdf
9. 4. Is it available as an app? We don't have access to the Web at my plant clinic site.
10. a. *Cornell Disease-Resistant Vegetable Cultivars web page is not currently available as an app. You have to download Excel files: <http://vegetablemndonline.ppath.cornell.edu/Tables/TableList.htm>*
11. 5. What damage does the leafminer do to the allium bulb? Will ornamental onion bulbs die?
12. a. *Effect on ornamental allium bulbs not yet known. The pest ruins edible alliums.*
13. 6. What does it mean if there are a lot of ants on a plant? Is it associated with Aphids?
14. a. *Yes, many times ants are associated with aphids. They protect them from predators.*
15. 7. I have multiple paw paw trees which bloom and have small fruit now but in past years the young fruit fall off and I do not get any mature fruit. What's happening?
16. a. *Could be a pollination issue- submit through Ask An Expert.*
17. 8. All of my thornless blackberries and raspberries died over the winter...?
18. a. *More information needed- submit through Ask An Expert.*
19. 9. Do you have control methods to recommend for slugs in cabbage and spinach?
20. a. *Slug bait called Sluggo, iron phosphate, is fairly safe to use.*
21. 10. Thornless blackberries that don't turn completely dark, have white areas instead. Didn't use to do this at first, but now is a yearly issue.
22. a. *White drupelet disorder, it's happening more frequently as climate change intensifies. Dry, hot, sunny weather is causing this to happen more in blackberries and raspberries. There is not much that can be done about this.*
23. b. [White Drupelets | NC State Extension](#)
24. 11. I see from the cicada link above that Mike advises folks not to plant any trees this year or next. How can I protect my young trees already planted from next year's cicadas.
25. a. *Using tulle might help protect them*
26. b. *Wait to plant new trees till spring 2022*
27. 12. I have a small fig tree in a pot that I haven't planted yet. Should I leave it in the pot until the cicadas are gone? I could keep it on a screened porch until later.
28. a. *Plant it now and protect it after it has been planted*
29. 13. How do you control squash stem borer? Is there a way to prevent squash borer attacks on squash plants?
30. a. *Plant later in the season to try to avoid the first generation. Cover plants with a row cover. Surround the stems with aluminum foil or diatomaceous earth. Monitor the plant and remove it from the stem. You will have better luck with more sprawling plants.*
31. 14. What soil and mulch should we advise people to use for raised beds?
 - a. *HGIC has great resources for this!*

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- b. [Soil to Fill Raised Beds](#)
32. 15. I have found grubs all in my flower beds this year practically every time I put a spade or shovel in the dirt. Is there a reason they are so bad this year? How can I get rid of them?
33. a. *Scarab beetle grubs. Not generally a problem, unless they are very plentiful and feeding on roots. They can be removed and placed in soapy water.*
34. 16. I followed the recommendations on MD Grows on winterizing my fig and it is doing great; it is 3 yo now how long should I be winterizing my fig?
35. a. *If you are in warmer areas like So. MD or Eastern Shore it's usually ok not to winterize it. Everywhere else in MD it's advisable to winter protect figs.*
36. 17. What can I do to treat infestations of whiteflies and Japanese beetles? Major infestation last year.
37. a. *Whiteflies are becoming a bigger issue this year- climate change may be causing them to be more prevalent. You can use insecticidal soap or horticultural oil. Japanese beetles can be swept into a bucket and disposed of.*
38. 18. I get lots of flowers on my squash plants but they never seem to pollinate - any advice? What might cause squash to produce only male blossoms?
39. a. *Squash get mostly male flowers first. It takes a while for female flowers to show up. If there are no squash, there may be another issue going on.*
40. 19. For people whose berry plants are spreading out of control through runners, Plant in pots? The plants are about 4 years old.
41. a. *Remove new plants that show up. Use landscape fabric along the sides of berry plants.*
42. 20. Does HGIC have any info on using straw bales in place of raised beds?
43. a. *HGIC does not, but WSU has information: [Straw Bale Gardening](#)*
44. 21. Do you recommend corn gluten to control weeds?
45. a. *HGIC does not recommend this for weed control in a vegetable garden. Other N sources are more cost effective.*
46. 22. I can never grow pumpkins because of mold on leaves , I live in Crownsville and I have tried everything
47. a. *Mold is likely powdery mildew. Send photos and more details to Ask An Expert. Look for a cultivar that is more disease resistant*
48. 23. Which small fruit trees do you recommend that are resistant in general
- a. *Asian persimmon, fig, serviceberry*

Questions for Emily:

1. Is the carpenter bee as good a pollinator as other bees such as honey bees or bumble bees?
a. *It is difficult to compare one pollinator to another. Insects pollinate differently.*
2. Do they tunnel only in dead wood or do they build tunnels in live wood?
a. *Only in dead wood*
3. Pest control people told me it was important to use an oil-based paint to deter them
a. *We don't have confirmation for that.*
4. Are the carpenter bees "generalists"? I see them on lots of different flowering shrubs/plants.
a. *They are generalists.*
5. Do they also burrow into the ground? I had those holes in my redbud tree once and the ground below was full of holes too.
a. *Not carpenter bees, but other types of bees are ground nesting.*
6. Could you put up a carpenter bee house or structure where it would be easy for them to nest and encourage them to nest there instead of a home or deck?

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- a. Yes, you can use thick, untreated pieces of wood or logs. Still protect wood where you do not want them to nest. Don't put nesting material for them too close to the house.*
7. Will kitchen compost in an outdoor bin attract Yellowjackets
 - a. Vegetable scraps would be unlikely, but they might come for fruit scraps. If it becomes an issue, try putting "browns" such as straw, hay or leaves, on top of the new scraps or turn in new kitchen scraps.*
8. My question was do the leaf-cutter bees nest in the ground?
 - a. There is a lot of diversity in the group, so some can be ground nesting, but others will burrow in wood.*
9. Can you purchase native plant seeds from local nurseries?
 - a. Maryland Native Plant Society has information about where to purchase native plants*
 - b. <https://mdflora.org/nurseries.html>*