



The Washtenaw Gardener

Washtenaw County Master Gardener Newsletter

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Downy Mildew Outbreak on Cucumbers

Mary Hausbeck

Michigan State University Extension, Department of Plant Pathology

When downy mildew appears, gardeners should be worried about their cucumbers, watermelon and cantaloupe.

And in July, the disease was reported on commercial cucumbers in three Michigan counties: Bay, Gratiot and Monroe.

The infection in the state is advanced, and with recent downy mildew outbreaks reported in Ontario, Ohio and Michigan, it is clear that Michigan cucurbit growers should not delay applying preventive fungicide sprays.

Cucumbers are highly susceptible to the disease, as are watermelon and cantaloupe.

In past years, there have been a few, scattered reports of downy mildew infecting summer and winter squash, along with pumpkins, in the eastern United States, but these crops appear less susceptible to the problem than cucumbers, watermelon and cantaloupe.

It is important to the cucurbit vegetable industry in the state to monitor and report all downy mildew outbreaks in both home gardens and commercial fields.

For homegrown cucurbit vegetables, homeowners should rely on fungicides that contain chlorothalonil as an active ingredient. Organic growers could use an approved formulation of a copper-based material to help slow the progression of the downy mildew.

It's important that commercial growers strictly adhere to the recommended fungicides that have been tested repeatedly in Michigan field trials. A misstep in the fungicide program through the use of an ineffective downy mildew product could mean crop loss. The tables on the next page shows recommended fungicides for cucumber and other vine crops.

The products that work haven't changed much over the last few years. Remember the old adage, if something (such as a new fungicide) sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Also, remember that the Environmental Protection Agency does not require a company to prove that its product works before making claims on the product's label.

Michigan growers are not novices at managing this disease and recognize that early action, effective fungicides and short spray intervals can win the day and protect the crop.

For more information, go to <http://veggies.msu.edu/>.



Downy mildew on cucumber. (Photo by Mary Hausbeck.)



Downy mildew on yellow squash. (Photo by Mary Hausbeck.)

The tables below show recommended fungicides for cucumber and other vine crops.

CUCUMBER	
APPLIED BEFORE DISEASE (7-day intervals)	APPLIED AFTER DISEASE (5-day intervals)
— Gavel 75WG (5 day PHI)	— Presidio 4FL (2 day PHI)
— Presidio 4FL (2 day PHI)	— Previcur Flex 6SC (2 day PHI)
— Previcur Flex 6SC (2 day PHI)	— Ranman 3.6SC (0 day PHI)
— Ranman 3.6SC (0 day PHI)	— Tanos 50WG (3 day PHI)
— Tanos 50WG (3 day PHI)	
Alternate products and mix each with either: — Dithane (mancozeb) 3 lb or — Bravo (chlorothalonil) 1.5 pt	Alternate products and mix each with either: — Dithane (mancozeb) 3 lb or — Bravo (chlorothalonil) 2 p

VINE CROPS, such as zucchini, squash, pumpkin, melon and gourds	
APPLIED BEFORE DISEASE (7- to 10-day intervals)	APPLIED AFTER DISEASE (7-day intervals)
— Gavel 75WG (5 day PHI)	— Presidio 4FL (2 day PHI)
— Presidio 4FL (2 day PHI)	— Previcur Flex 6SC (2 day PHI)
— Previcur Flex 6SC (2 day PHI)	— Ranman 3.6SC (0 day PHI)
— Ranman 3.6SC (0 day PHI)	— Tanos 50WG (3 day PHI)
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Junior Master Gardeners in the Greenhouse
Carol J. Figarra (MG 2007)

The last classroom session for the 2011 JMG program on June 7 provided a special treat for the students, who visited the conservatory at The University of Michigan's Matthai Botanical Gardens.



Students, left to right, Ben, Joseph and Ty are fascinated by the bog.

For many of the children, this was their first visit to the conservatory.

Each child had the opportunity to explore three biomes — tropical, temperate and desert — and chose a favorite plant. In turn, each student shared the information with the class.

In one spot, students excitedly shared their knowledge of different bog plants, including butterwort, pitcher plant and Venus fly trap.

Other plants of interest to the

students were bonsai trees, sausage trees, the banyan tree, bird of paradise and the ever popular chocolate tree.



Nicholas, center, picked the triangle cactus as his favorite plant and explained the parts of the plant that hold water and those that help with photosynthesis.

Junior Master Gardeners Plan Their Gardens

Carol J. Figarra (MG 2007)

JMG students arranged their garden before starting to plant it, figuring out how to provide the best growth advantage for the vegetables.

They discussed plant compatibility, sunlight, spacing, cool and warm weather crops, root vegetables and harvest times.



A group of boys used felt vegetables to plan their garden.



The Junior Master Gardener course included a lesson on cultivating a healthy lawn. Will, above, diligently searched for the different components and critters that can be found in turf.

Make Sure Your Soaker Hose Does Its Job

Gretchen Voyle

Michigan State University Extension, Livingston County

Soaker hoses have become very popular with gardeners. The hoses can be an excellent way to conserve water, because very little is lost to evaporation.

Some of the hoses have small holes that allow water to slowly ooze into the soil, and other soaker hoses exude water along their entire length, because the water soaks slowly through its skin.

The hoses often are placed in serpentine shapes around plants, then snuggled into the mulch in order to hide them while they supply moisture to thirsty plants.

What most gardeners don't know is that the soaker can quit doing its job because of a buildup of bacterial iron.

Bacterial iron can be found in well water. It is a bacterium that derives energy to live and multiply from oxidizing naturally-occurring dissolved iron in the water.

When you take the top off the toilet tank and see a rust-colored slimy film clinging to the inside of the tank, that's bacterial iron. This is why you have unwanted orange underwear and T-shirts in your laundry. And it's one of the reasons you purchased that water softener.

If the plumbing was done correctly in your house,

the inside water goes through your water softener. The outside water does not, since the more water that goes through the water softener, the shorter the life of the water softener.

As a result, outside well water can have much more bacterial iron than inside water. Over a period of time, the hose becomes filled with a rusty brown, gelatinous slime that can block the water in your soaker hoses.

So check the hoses by looking to see that the soil is moistened to the correct depth after watering. Even if the hose feels cool and damp, little water could be escaping.

A lack of water could lead to wilting plants, which become stressed and may die.

Whatever your water source, always check your soaker hoses periodically to see that they are leaking, weeping or oozing adequately to keep plants moist and healthy.

Besides bacterial iron, calcium deposits, small grains of sand and other debris can also plug up the works.

And know when to say goodbye to nonfunctioning soaker hoses.

Be there with water when the weather is not.



Recycle for a Handy Window Ledge Plant Tray

Recycled Gardener (MG 1997)

A sunny window ledge can be a great place for plants, but watering can be a problem, especially for plants, including African violets, that prefer taking in water from the bottom. (In some cases, bottom watering is preferred since it avoids water spots on the leaves and rot caused by too much moisture.)

To avoid wet window ledges - especially with bottom watering - recycle a clear plastic container used for coffee cake packaging. Those foot-long trays with hinged tops are great to put under small pots. Simply cut off the lid at the attachment fold. Trim the hinges and place the top into the bottom half.

The result is a terrific tray for plants that you water from either the top or the bottom. The tray is also easily cleaned and replaced. Make sure the light is right for the plants.



The Living Compost Pile

The Recycled Gardener (MG 1997)

The compost pile is a unique environment.

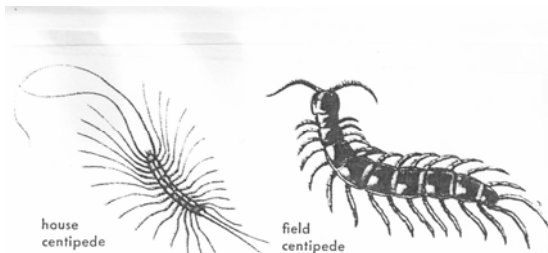
The living community is busy breaking down organic materials into basic nutrients. With the assistance of specific organisms, the decomposition uses and releases energy.

Centipedes are part of this community and can be found in and around the decaying compost. Centipedes are arthropods and are related to millipedes. Like all arthropods, they have exoskeletons and jointed body parts. Centipedes differ from millipedes in that centipedes have one pair of legs per body segment, while millipedes have two.

Field centipedes are found in moist areas and are generally nocturnal. They are carnivores, feasting on other organisms.

Centipedes have small claws on the first body segment. The claws secrete a poison which paralyzes prey. Centipedes do bite, producing a painful sting.

There are more than 8,000 different species of centipedes, ranging in length from less than a quarter inch to more than a foot in the tropics.



Beekeepers List Upcoming Talks

Richard Mendel (MG 2009)

The Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers (A²B²) group meets on a monthly basis to share information on a broad spectrum of interest that includes those who just want to become knowledgeable about honeybees to those who have been keeping bees for a number of years.



Monthly meetings are free and open to anyone who wishes to attend.

Typically a meeting begins with a presentation or lecture by a member or visitor, followed by questions and discussion. Audience members often share information from their personal experiences.

The monthly group meetings focus on issues typically germane to beekeeping activities during the specific time of year.

For example, there is community interest in the plight of honeybees, and the meeting could focus on recent research of colony collapse disorder (CCD) and the losses in the pollinator population in general.

Its mission statement is to save our bees as we share our knowledge.

Below is the meeting schedule and topics for the Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers over the next two months.

August 9, 2011 – Extracting Honey, 7-9 p.m. in room 125 of the main building at the University of Michigan’s Matthaei Botanical Gardens. The meeting will include a discussion of the history of honey, as well as of honey’s unique properties. Different types of honeycomb will be reviewed, along with methods used in removing and extracting honey.

August 13, 2011 – Honey Extracting Demonstration, 9 a.m.-noon in room 125 of the main building at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. This is a family-oriented, hands-on demonstration showing how to remove frames of honey from a hive body, uncap the honeycomb and extract the honey with a centrifuge. Taste the fruits of the honeybee combs as you remove the wax cappings. Please register beforehand by calling 734-647-7600.

September 14, 2011 – Fall Management I, 7-9 p.m. in room 125 of the main building at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. This meeting will review the health of the hive in preparation for winter. What is the status of pests and pathogens? Determine if the hive is strong enough to go into winter cluster and survive. Utilize last minute intervention to aid in their survival.

“So Easy to Preserve”

Have you ever had an abundance of fresh produce from your garden and wished you had the skills to preserve it for later use?

Take a look at the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension’s fifth edition of “So Easy to Preserve.”

This 375-page book contains the latest U.S. Department of Agriculture recommendations for safe food preservation and has more than 185 tested recipes, along with step-by-step instructions and in-depth information for both new and experienced food preservers.

To get your own personal copy for only \$18, contact Cindy Fischer at 734-222-3948 or email her at fischerc@ewashtenaw.org.

**Master Gardener Alumni Association of Washtenaw County News**

COMING ATTRACTIONS: Although we have no meetings in July and August, the fall meeting calendar gets off to a great start with Celtic Garden Imports discussing “Period Gardening” on Sept. 20. See examples of their work at <http://www.celticgardenimports.com/>. On Oct. 18, Janet Macunovich, widely published and highly respected for her publications and weekly newsletter, will share her special gardening perspective and talents with us. You’ll find Janet’s website and letter at <http://www.gardenatoz.com/>.

CALL FOR PHOTOS: Don’t forget your cameras when you head to your gardens. All Master Gardeners are encouraged to take photos of their MG projects and their own home gardens this summer and to send them, or a link to a website containing the photos, to bobdevereaux@gmail.com. We will use those photos and links to create a slideshow to display at the Fall Awards Banquet.

The MGAAWC meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month, September through May, at 7 p.m. in the basement conference room of the County Building at 705 N. Zeeb Road. If you have suggestions for future speakers or topics, please send a message to vice president Bob Devereaux at rdevereaux@chartermi.net.

August Calendar

Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum

1800 Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor 734-647-7600

<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/mbg/>

Call for classes and to register

Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers

Extracting Honey, Tuesday, August 9, 7 - 9 p.m.

Honey Extracting Demonstration, Saturday, August 13, 9 a.m.- noon.

MSU Extension Washtenaw County

734-997-1678

Dial A Garden for August

Phone 734-971-1129 to listen to current topics

- ◆ Powdery mildew
- ◆ Harvesting vegetable seed
- ◆ House plant care while on vacation
- ◆ Millipedes
- ◆ Summer planting for fall vegetables
- ◆ Poison ivy control
- ◆ Ticks
- ◆ Late summer & fall grub control
- ◆ Hot weather care of trees & shrubs
- ◆ Harvesting tips for late summer & autumn vegetables
- ◆ Spruce needle cast disease
- ◆ Watering the lawns
- ◆ Controlling mosquitoes
- ◆ Vegetable diseases & tomato problem vegetable



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