OSU MG Study Group Diagnostic Show-and-Tell Highlights: August 8, 2017

Prepared and photographed by Elizabeth Price

Join our friendly OSU MG Study Group on the first Monday of each month from 1 to 3 pm for Diagnostic Show-and-Tell. Have fun while learning! We explore bugs, diseases and more. Below are a few samples of what MGs brought to our last session.

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Goose grass (*Eleusine indica*): not crab grass, not quack grass

Margaret brought in samples of the weed, goose grass, an annual that shows up in the middle of the summer when it is nice and hot. The flattened plant stems arch up at the ends, where they develop spike-like inflorescences. Young plants are easy to spot and come up with a swipe of your toe.

Quack grass (*Elymus repens*) is a tall upright perennial. Crab grass (*Digitaris* spp.) looks similar to goose grass but does not grow in our area.

For more information:
http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/WEEDS/goosegrass.html


Spike-like inflorescence


Young plant


Goose grass lies flat with ends that arch up

Kinnikinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) leaf gall aphids

Ginny brought in samples of kinnikinnick, a popular native ground cover. The samples were heavily infested with dark aphids that feed on new plant growth at the stem tips. In response to the injury, the leaves thicken and distort into what one has to admit are nice-looking galls. The galls are green at first and then a glossy pinkish-red. The aphids, tucked far inside the folds of the galls, are protected from insecticidal soaps or a strong spray of water, the typical methods for dealing with aphids.

The best control is careful observation so you can snip off the galls while they are still green. This aphid also feeds on other species in the *Arctostaphylos* genus.

For more information: https://pnwhandbooks.org/insect/hort/landscape/hosts-pests-landscape-plants/kinnikinnick-arctostaphylos-aphid


Aphids enclosed by galls


Close-up of galls


Opened gall showing aphids (magnified)

Blue spruce (*Picea pungens*) tip blight

Skip brought in samples of a blue spruce cultivar suffering from tip blight, which gives the affected needles a pink color. It is a fungus that also affects western hemlock, ponderosa pine, Sitka spruce and true cedars. The bases of new shoots are infected in spring. The damage is noticeable in summer, when the shoot dies back to the branch, often taking the shape of a hook.


Close-up of tip blight in a hook shape

The only control is to prune out affected areas if you can and clean up plant debris around the tree to break the fungus life cycle.

For more information:
https://pnwhandbooks.org/plantdisease/host-disease/spruce-picea-spp-tip-blight


Tip blight

The many pink areas on this blue spruce are tip blight.