

Kansas Plant Pest Act and the Pest Freedom Standards

Jennifer Smith, Kansas City Metro Area Specialist

What's the big deal about a few insects, weeds, or diseased plants? Hopefully you already know and care about the answer to this question, but sometimes live plant dealers ask about certain pests or are unsure how statutes and laws apply to them. The Plant Pest and Agriculture Commodity Certification Act (Plant Pest Act for short) is the major statute affecting live plant dealers. The major purpose of the act is to protect the state from outbreaks of dangerous plant pests and diseases. Protection is supported by area inspectors and state specialists who work to locate pests and take appropriate action when necessary.

One portion of the Plant Pest Act calls for and defines the licensing of live plant "dealers" (not just growers) because retail garden centers, landscapers, florists, lawn care companies who install sod, and others are involved in the movement of plants. Any time plants are moved, there is a risk of moving pests with them.

The other major portion of the act affecting live plant dealers is the Pest Freedom Standards (K.A.R. 4-15-10). This section identifies specific pests and limits of these pests. As a reminder, the Pest Freedom Standards include:

- Zero tolerance for all life stages of borers, scarab beetles (including larvae aka white grubs), scale insects, and weevils
- Zero tolerance for viruses, viroids, phytoplasmas, spiroplasmas, mycoplasmas, phytophthora diseases, pine wilt nematode, root knot nematode, fire blight, crown gall, and bacterial wilt
- Minimal tolerance (< than 5 percent of the lot or group) for other wilts, galls, cankers, root rots, and crown rots
- Minimal tolerance (< than 5 percent of the lot or group) for plants affected by plant parasitic nematodes
- Low tolerance (< than 15 percent of the lot has more than 10 percent of foliage affected) for foliar diseases of non-evergreen plants
- Low tolerance (< than 5 percent of the lot has more than 1 percent of foliage affected) for foliar diseases of evergreens

Inspectors also work under the authority of the Kansas Tree and Shrubbery Law, the Kansas Noxious Weed Law and Regulations, the Black Stem Rust Law, and several state and federal quarantines including

quarantines for emerald ash borer and thousand cankers of walnut.

Plants infested with pests not listed in quarantines or in the Kansas Pest Freedom Standards may still be subject to regulatory action as necessary to prevent economic or environmental harm. Also, plants to be exported from Kansas are subject to the requirements of the destination state or country which may be more stringent than Kansas' regulations.

The Plant Pest Act was enacted in 1907 and has been amended periodically with the latest update in 2012. When changes are needed, the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) works with stakeholder groups such as the Kansas Nursery and Landscape Association. The full text of the statute is available on the KDA website at <http://agriculture.ks.gov/divisions-programs/plant-protect-weed-control>, under "Statutes, Regulations and Quarantines."

With Plant Pathology; an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure

Robert Buhler, Western Kansas Area Specialist

Plant diseases can be very difficult or impossible to cure once a plant becomes infected, but a little prevention can make the difference between having a marketable plant and one that ends up in the dumpster.

In greenhouse situations, the grower may want to consider the following questions:

Are there weeds growing in the greenhouse or just outside the greenhouse?

Weeds are a major harbor for plant diseases and insect vectors. Controlling weeds can significantly reduce the risk of plant disease infection in your crop.

When your plants arrive, do you examine them for plant diseases or insects?

Examining your plants upon arrival may prevent major problems in the future. This is also the best time for making a claim to the supplier. If you feel the plants are infested with disease or insects, feel free to contact your area plant protection specialist for assistance. Contact information can be found on page 4 of this newsletter.

Did you thoroughly clean your benches and used pots prior to use?

Are you using pasteurized potting mix? Are you reusing potting mix and have you heat-treated it? Are you removing dead and dying plants from your greenhouse?

Good sanitation goes a long way toward preventing future problems with plant diseases. When you clean out dead and dying plants, get rid of them! Making a pile inside the greenhouse or just outside the greenhouse keeps the disease inoculum in proximity to your plants.

Many of the things mentioned above also apply to woody plants:

- You should always examine your newly arrived woody plants for disease and insects.
- If you repot your woody plants, make sure any used pots are clean and the soilless mix has been pasteurized.
- Keep the weeds under control around your nursery stock to prevent the transfer of disease and insects from this harboring source.
- Get rid of dead and dying woody stock. These things provide a wonderful home for borers and canker diseases. Also, don't just make a pile of dead material in your nursery. Get rid of it! Your three choices are burn, bury or chip finely.

This is just a beginning list. Depending on the crop, there are many additional management strategies for the prevention of plant diseases. If you need assistance with your live plant operation concerning plant diseases, insects or weeds feel free to contact your KDA area plant protection specialist for assistance.

Spring Cleaning the Garden
Greg Chrislip, State Entomologist

1. Clean up any fallen twigs and branches—, they may harbor insect pests that overwinter inside the branches or in bark crevices. Inspect your trees and shrubs for broken branches and prune out the affected portion of the plant. Broken limbs are pathways for pathogens and insects to enter the plant.
2. Clean up fallen leaves and fruit. If you had a problem with chestnut or acorn weevils and you waited until spring to clean up, you are too late. The larva chews out of the nuts in the fall and pupate in the ground. Plum curculio over winters in leaf litter or the soil. The curculio becomes active normally near the time that apples are blossoming, so remove leaf litter early. Removing the leaf litter can reduce

adult populations that feed on the newly emerging leaves, flowers and fruits.

3. Inspect the perennial plants for winter damage and clean up any leftover blossoms or leaves. Remove leaves that have blown around the plants. If you missed cutting back the iris plants in the fall, do it early before eggs on the leaves begin to hatch, when the new leaves emerge in April or early May.
4. Cultivate early: turning the soil over early in the spring exposes insects in the soil to freezing temperatures. This is not advised for heavy clay soils.
5. Pulling the mulch back from the foundation of the house so that a six inch area of soil is left exposed will help eliminate pests getting into the home as the weather warms. A barrier spray can be applied at the same time.

“Banking” on Future Generations of Weeds
Scott Marsh, State Weeds Specialist

No, we are not planning on or hoping for weeds to grow into the future. The weeds themselves however, are doing just that.

You may have heard about the tens of thousands of seeds our noxious weeds can produce each year. What you may not have heard is that not all of those seeds germinate into new plants the next spring. -Many of them, in some cases a majority of them, remain in the soil for many years, even decades after they were produced. They are the weeds' back-up plan in case the germinating seeds are killed off by responsible, law-abiding landowners.

Those dormant seeds in the soil are known collectively as the seed bank. When the soil gets warmer than usual, like when the growing plants die off or other favorable conditions occur, these seeds will germinate into new plants.

You may have noticed that after you have aggressively controlled every weed you could find, more seem to pop up out of nowhere. These are withdrawals from the seed bank.

The best way to combat the seed bank is to control your weed infestations early before too many generations of

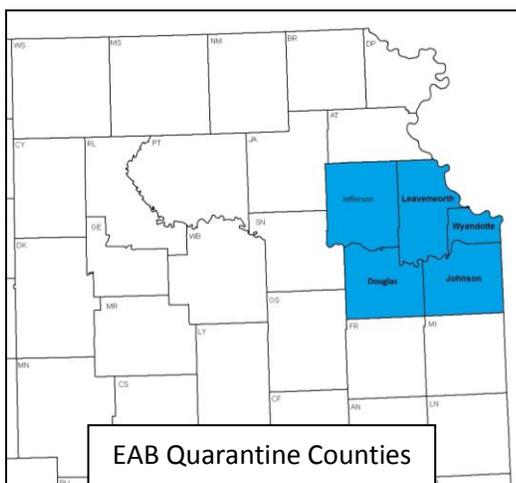
seeds are produced and to control growing weeds before they flower and produce even more seeds.

Trapping and Survey Programs

Emerald Ash Borer — The national trapping survey for emerald ash borer in 2015 consisted of setting 172 purple prism traps and 14 green Lindgren funnel traps coated with fluon throughout Kansas. Of these, 71 were set by KDA and 313 were set by the USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service’s Plant Protection and Quarantine (USDA-APHIS-PPQ). The state trapped Atchison, Barton, Bourbon, Butler, Cherokee, Crawford, Doniphan, Douglas, Graham, Harvey, Jefferson, Labette, Linn, Neosho, Pawnee, Reno, Rooks, Riley, Russell, Shawnee, Sheridan, Sherman and Trego counties. The traps were to be put up in USDA pre-planned areas. If those areas were not suitable, then the traps were moved to campground sites or other high risk locations. The traps were up from March until September. All traps were negative for emerald ash borer. For information on the emerald ash borer, visit: www.emeraldashborer.info

On September 30, four larvae were removed while peeling a tree that was girdled and checked over the summer in Eudora. Confirmation of the presence of emerald ash borer (EAB) was made on October 8 by USDA-APHIS-PPQ.

Then, on October 21, six larvae were found when a girdled tree was peeled at Perry Lake below the dam. Regulatory officials with the USDA-APHIS-PPQ confirmed the presence of emerald ash borer on October 23. See below map for current quarantine counties.



Sixteen girdled trap trees were set, one in Atchison, two in Butler, three in Douglas, one in Jefferson, two in Miami, five in Reno and two in Sedgwick County. The trees were girdled in April and then removed and peeled in September and October.

Pathway Survey — The first year of a two year (2015 and 2016) pathway survey occurred at 30 sites during May to October 2015 at high-risk container yards looking for new exotic plant pest species that are potentially harmful to agriculture/horticulture. The survey occurred in Douglas, Franklin, Johnson, Shawnee and Wyandotte Counties. One European gypsy moth was found on August 7 in the Edwardsville area. USDA-APHIS will be doing a delimiting survey in 2016. This same survey will continue in 2016 but with 35 sites.

Exotic Wood Borers/Bark Beetle Survey — For 2016, a survey is planned looking for exotic wood borers and bark beetles. *Cerceris* wasp colonies (native biocontrol wasp) will be visually surveyed at 25 sites looking for dropped prey consisting of the gold spotted oak borer, oak splendor beetle, European oak borer and emerald ash borer. Traps will be set for Japanese pine sawyer, oak ambrosia beetle, European hardwood ambrosia beetle and black spruce beetle. The traps will be placed in forests, lumber processing facilities and parks for two months (May and June). Bio surveillance for *cerceris* wasp colonies will occur at ball fields at schools, parks and townships during the same time frame.

We always appreciate the live plant dealers and land owners who let us put traps on their property. This type of work is of great importance in protecting Kansas. Early detection will improve the odds of eradication and containment success if the pests are found.

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