

Aster Yellows on Purple Coneflower

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Do the flowers on your purple coneflower look weird? If yes, your coneflowers may be suffering from a common disease called aster yellows. Aster yellows causes chlorosis or yellowing of the plant, stunting, irregular growth and distortion of the flower head. This unusual growth is often mis-diagnosed as herbicide

damage. Aster yellows is a disease that is carried from plant to plant by insects and survives winter in infected plant material.

To manage aster yellows, all infected plants should be removed from the garden and destroyed. There are no chemical treatments available for aster yellows. Since the disease can also survive in neighboring weeds, it is important to maintain good weed control in and around your garden.



Coneflowers



Coneflower with yellow asters.

Trees Reverting

Among the "What's wrong with my tree?" calls, some of the most interesting deal with a phenomenon called reversion. When a conifer or hardwood tree with an unusual ornamental characteristic begins to send out shoots with normal foliage or growth for the species, the new growth is said to have reverted.

How does a reversion take place? Many ornamental cultivars begin when an alert plantsperson notices a tree or part of a tree with a unique growth characteristic, like unusual leaf color or weeping growth habit. These atypical plants or shoots arise through genetic mutation. Buds or cuttings from the plants are then grafted onto standard trees and, if they remain true to form and have horticultural merit, they ultimately make their way into the nursery trade. Just as the original genetic mutation occurred to produce the unique character, occasionally a reverse mutation occurs and portions



Harlequin maple frequently reverts from white-edged foliage back to normal Norway maple coloration.



of the plant 'revert' back the species' normal growth. Some of the more common examples of reversions occur in dwarf spruces and variegated plants such as Harlequin maple. In the case of dwarf spruces, homeowners will often report "a tree growing out of my tree."

When a reversion occurs, it is time to follow the advice of the wise TV sage, Barney Fife, and "Nip it, nip it in the bud!"



Dwarf Alberta spruce occasionally revert to normal white spruce.

Examine the tree and determine where the reversion originated and prune off the reverted shoots. Often reverted shoots grow more vigorously than the rest of the tree. If left unpruned, reversions will dominate the tree and the homeowner who paid extra for a dwarf Alberta spruce or variegated maple is eventually left with a plain old white spruce or Norway maple.

Source: Bert Cregg, Michigan State University

2008 Great Plants

The Great Plants program is a joint effort of the Nebraska Nursery & Landscape Association and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum that selects and promotes exceptional plants. These plants are reliably hardy, easy to care for and ornamental.

2008 Tree

Ostrya virginiana, American Hophornbeam. A graceful, medium-sized native tree with horizontal branches forming an interesting zig-zag pattern. Hops-like fruits in summer; heart-shaped leaves are soft to the touch and change to a mild yellow in the fall. It is slow-growing until established and resists ice, snow, insects and disease. It occurs naturally as an under story tree along the Missouri river bluffs and up into the Niobrara river valley and grows best in part shade away from hot, windswept areas and salted winter roads but can also be grown in full sun. Grows 30 to 40 feet high and 20 to 25 feet wide.



American Hophornbeam

2008 Shrub

Euonymus atropurpurea, Eastern Wahoo. This native shrub is also referred to as a burning bush with its orange/red fall color and attractive rosy-pink fruit capsules that persist into winter. But do not confuse this plant with the common winged euonymus,



Eastern Wahoo

Euonymus alatus. The Wahoo is very shade tolerant, yet it grows well and becomes an attractive dense specimen in full sun. It is pH adaptable and drought-tolerant. Can be grown in clump form or pruned up to form an attractive 8 - 12 foot small tree.

Source: Nebraska Statewide Arboretum

Control Winter Annual Weeds Now

Annual broadleaf weeds such as chickweed, henbit and shepherd's-purse are winter annuals that germinate in the fall. If you had these weeds in your yard or garden this spring, the seeds will germinate soon. The appropriate pre-emergence herbicide should be applied early to mid-September for control of these weeds.

— Mary Jane Frogge, UNL Extension Associate



Garden Guide

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

By Mary Jane Frogge, UNL Extension Associate

Fall is a good time for improving your garden soil. Add manure, compost and leaves to increase the organic matter content.

Root cuttings from annual bedding plants such as begonias, coleus, geraniums and impatiens. These plants can be overwintered in a sunny window and provide plants for next year's garden.

Pears should be picked at the hard ripe stage and allowed to finish ripening off the tree. The base color of yellow pears should change from green to yellow as the fruit approaches maturity.

Be sure to keep strawberry beds weed free. Every weed you pull now will help make weeding much easier next spring.

Do not wait for frost warnings to move your plants indoors. Temperatures of 45 degrees F or lower can damage many tropical house plants.

Pot up chives, parsley and other herbs to extend the growing season in the house.

Collect okra seed pods, gourds, sumac seed heads, rose hips and other suitable materials for dried arrangements. Air dry these materials in a dark, cool location.

Before the first frost, dig up caladiums. Allow them to dry and store them in a dry place for the winter.

Perennial phlox can be divided about every third or fourth year. Divide big clumps of perennial phlox into thirds. Early fall or early spring are the best times to plant or transplant them.

Divide lily of the valley.

Select accent plants for your landscape that will provide autumn colors. Trees with red fall color are flowering dogwood, red maple, sugar maple, Norway maple, red oak and scarlet oak. Shrubs with red fall foliage include sumac, viburnum, winged euonymus and barberry.

Allow plants to finish the summer growth cycle in a normal manner. Never encourage growth with heavy applications of fertilizer or excessive pruning at this time. Plants will delay their dormancy process that has already begun in anticipation of winter in the months ahead. New growth can be injured by an early freeze.

Tree wound paints used after pruning are no longer recommended as they can slow healing and may promote decay.

If pesky seedlings of woody plants, such as elm, mulberry, hackberry or maple are found growing in your yard, remove them as soon as possible. If left too long, they will take over gardens and other landscape plantings.

Rake up leaves, twigs and fruit from crabapple trees and dispose of them in the trash to help control apple scab disease.

Water newly planted trees and shrubs to provide sufficient moisture and prevent winter damage. Add a two-inch layer of organic mulch such as shredded bark, around the base of plants to retain soil moisture and regulate soil temperature.

Wood ashes contain phosphorous, potassium and calcium. It can be placed on vegetable gardens and flower beds.

Save seeds from favorite flowers such as marigolds by allowing the flower heads to mature. Lay seeds on newspaper and turn them often to dry. Store the dry seeds in glass jars or envelopes in a cool, dry, dark place.

Hot peppers will keep best if stored after they are dry. Thread the peppers on a string to dry. Hang in a cool, dry place.