

Maple wilt is common

NEWARK, Del. — Maples are among the most loved shade trees, but unfortunately, they're not problem-free. Maple wilt, also called Verticillium wilt, is a common and serious disease. The destructive, soil-borne Verticillium fungus kills many maples in Delaware each year. University of Delaware extension agricultural agent Bob Hochmuth says he's seeing an unusual number of cases this year due to the stresses caused by unfavorable growing conditions over the last two summers.

Norway maples seem especially susceptible to infection by Verticillium, but silver, red, sugar and Japanese maples are also vulnerable.

The disease organism usually enters a tree by way of its roots and spreads through the sapwood into the upper branches. Eventually one or more large limbs or even the entire crown may begin to die back. Infected limbs produce sparse, sickly looking leaves which may wilt suddenly and die.

A diseased tree may die within one season, or it may linger on, dying slowly over several years. Survival time depends on the size and vigor of the tree, as well as on general weather conditions.

Olive-green streaks sometimes appear in the sapwood of wilt-infected maples, usually in the trunk and larger limbs. For a definite diagnosis, take part of an infected limb to a county extension office.

Hochmuth says the disease is hard to control after it becomes established, so he recommends cutting down and destroying seriously infected trees. However, a tree that's in fairly good health, with only a few limbs infected, may be worth trying to save.

Rescue efforts involve removing dead and dying branches, watering during dry spells, and fertilizing generously. If the tree was not fertilized in early spring, apply a 10-6-4, 10-10-10, or other high-nitrogen fertilizer as soon as possible.

As with many plant diseases, it's better to prevent maple wilt than to attempt a cure, Hochmuth says. So keep maples (and other trees) in healthy, vigorous condition by fertilizing properly (every other year for maples), watering, pruning, and repairing injuries. A tree that receives proper care is less likely to become diseased and should thrive for many years.

Egg yield still down

HARRISBURG — April 1984 egg production in Pennsylvania totaled 331 million, 14 percent below April 1983 production, according to the Pennsylvania Crop and Livestock Reporting Service.

The average number of layers on hand during April 1984 was 15.8 million compared with 17.8 million on hand a year ago. Egg production per 100 layers was 2,098

compared with 2,207 for April 1983. The nation's laying flocks produced 5.64 billion eggs during April, fractionally above the 5.62 billion produced a year ago. The total number of layers during April averaged 278 million, one percent above the 275 million a year ago. April egg production per 100 layers was 2,030 compared with 2,045 eggs for April 1983.

High tech food processing

(Continued from Page D20)

by seasonal availability. Food processors want a steady, dependable flow of raw products—often year-round. This is seldom possible in the mid-Atlantic, so buyers prefer to deal with southern or western suppliers."

Nationally the trend is to locate new food plants closer to raw commodity sources. By cooperating more closely, can food processors, university research and extension personnel, and farmers in the mid-Atlantic reverse this trend and stimulate more regional production?

Primary food processors—canners, driers, freezers, bottlers and packers—deal directly with farmers. Secondary processors (those who take food ingredients and further process them into such things as TV-dinners, chicken franks and health foods) are more isolated from farmers, but Vaughn says their decisions strongly influence demand, cropping patterns and farmer profits. HTFP would be concentrated among the secondary processors.

Vaughn says high tech food processing and farm interests need to work together to assure processors the best possible supply of local raw commodities while strengthening regional agriculture. Many Delmarva farmers are willing to consider growing other crops for which there's a good market.

"Those who favor developing a regional HTFP industry should also consider the possibilities for expanded international trade in processed food products," the economist says. "Commodities like sugar, tea, coffee, and cocoa shipped into eastern ports offer opportunities for mid-Atlantic processors. Going the other way, increased exports to affluent foreign buyers might open up markets for high quality foods

processed in this region."

He says decisionmakers must also take into account the environmental concerns involved in food processing. Questions about water availability, waste disposal and rising energy costs cannot be ignored.

"Since governments, businesses and private individuals all influence a region's economic development," Vaughn concludes, "high technology food processing may warrant combined public and private investment. But before that can happen, the benefits and costs involved as well as the available resources—both raw materials and support services for research and development—should be fully evaluated. Only sound investment decisions can improve the region's economy."

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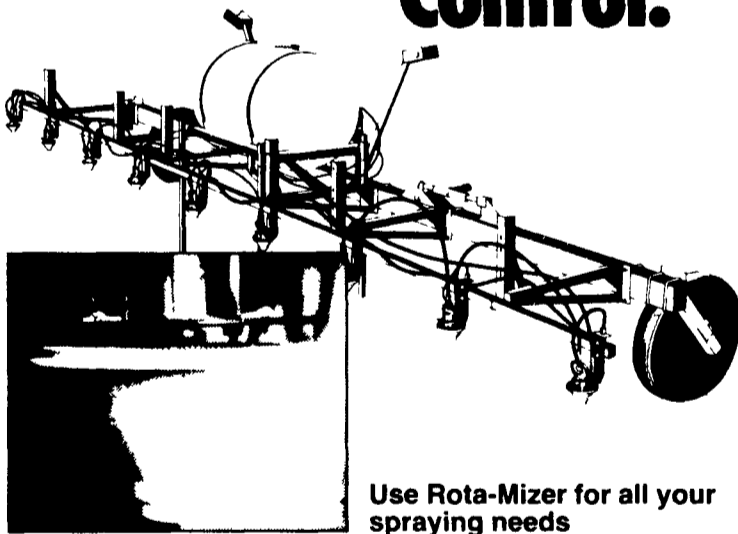
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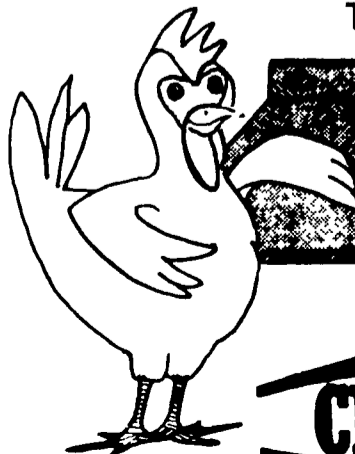
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