

Questions and Answers for Diagnostics practice on Plant Identification – 4.20.2021

1. I removed all my roses because of Japanese beetles. But the insect is still in my landscape and now they are attacking my crabapple, plum tree, and potentilla. I thought roses were the problem?

The Japanese Beetle most likely attacks what plant family? Rosaceae family – explain that JB has a higher affinity for plants in this family.

Ensure positive ID of the beetle, could be something else!

Fact Sheet 5.601 Japanese Beetle <https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/insects/japanese-beetle-5-601/>

2. I have an ash tree with pretty red berries in the fall. The birds love that tree! I don't want to lose it. When should I start treating this tree for Emerald Ash Borer?

What kind of ash? *Fraxinus sp.* or *Sorbus sp.*? It could be a Mountain Ash which is a member of the Rosaceae family and therefore not susceptible to EAB. In this case it's important to note the distinction between common and scientific names.

Planttalk script 1425 <https://planttalk.colostate.edu/topics/insects-diseases/1425-ash-borers/>

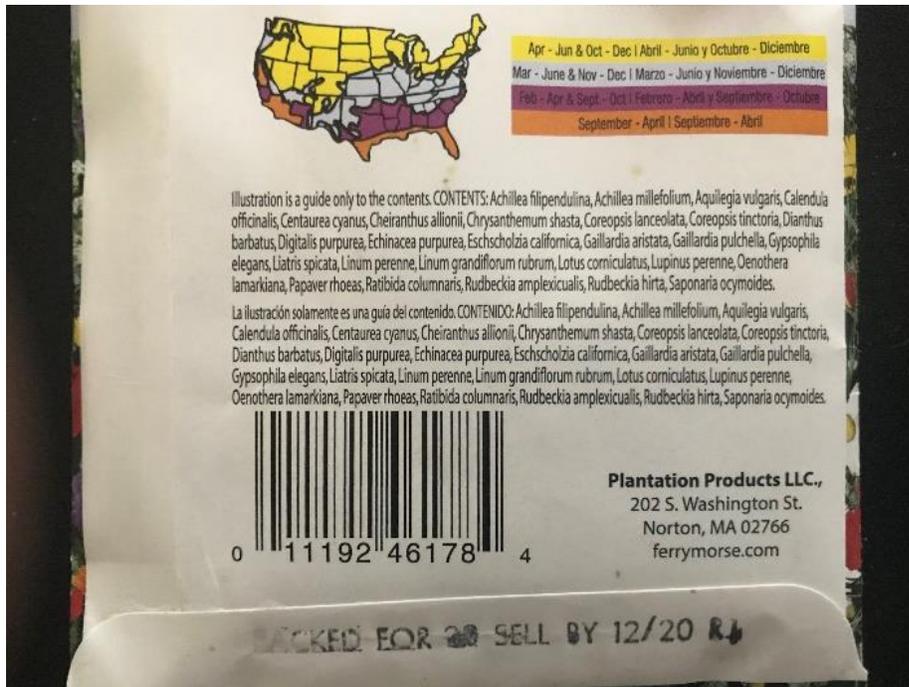
EAB resources: <https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/insects/emerald-ash-borer-resources/>

3. I have a weed growing in my grass. It is long and has spikes. I want to know how to kill it. What questions would you ask if a picture is not available?

What additional questions would you ask (in addition to asking for a picture?)

- Picture?
- What time of year does it show up?
- Does it flower?
- Size (height/width)
- Can you bring in a sample?
- What do the leaves look like?
- How many weeds?
- Is the weed near other desired plants?
- What is its growth habit?
- What does its roots look like? / Easy to pull or difficult?
- Is it grass like or broadleaf?

4. I purchased this packet of wildflower seeds for the hillside behind my house. Are any of these seeds invasive in Colorado? See photo below:



One species may be considered invasive depending on water and environmental conditions: *Eschscholzia californica*, California poppy. Provide resources for invasive plants in CO and provide a distinction between the terms invasive and noxious.

5. Our Catalpa seems to be different than others in the neighborhood. Our tree seems to take forever to lose the old seed pods. Others in the area appear to be free of the old pods. Ours is the odd tree; is this due to species, gender, or what? Cleaning up pods has become a year-round job.

Dirr's Hardy Trees and Shrubs

Mortonarboretum.org

<https://www.mortonarb.org/trees-plants/tree-plant-descriptions?terms=catalpa>

There are two species of Catalpa commonly planted in our area: *Catalpa ovata* (Chinese Catalpa) has pods that split open in the fall <https://trees.umn.edu/chinese-catalpa-catalpa-ovata> *Catalpa speciosa* (Northern/Western Catalpa), which retains pods through the winter <https://trees.umn.edu/northern-catalpa-catalpa-speciosa>. I suspect you have the Northern species, and your neighbors the Chinese species.

6. We live on the western slope of Colorado and need evergreens that will work as a privacy screen. Preferably something fast growing without an aggressive root system as there is an irrigation line and a pool in the vicinity. Does the sky pencil holly grow very well here? We don't care for the pinyon, ponderosa, Austrian pines, cypress or arborvitae. Any input is appreciated. Thanks!

No, *Ilex* species do not work here. Our soils are too alkaline and climate too dry. You could try privet (Vicary works well) or there are a bunch of different upright junipers like Cologreen, Wichita Blue, Grey Gleam, Skyrocket. I would look at the local nurseries like Mt. Garfield or Bookcliff for the best selection. I would look for more drought tolerant plants like our native Utah and Rocky Mountain junipers. Often winter watering once a month is needed due to prolonged dryness. Drip needs to be expanded every year at the plants grow to sufficient water and keep plants healthy.

Japanese hollies require a well-drained, slightly acidic soil with a good base of organic matter. Plants will tolerate short periods of drought once established, but prolonged drought periods are not recommended. They are best in full sun or light to moderate shade. Japanese hollies are best in USDA zones 7 through 9.

<https://www.uaex.edu/yard-garden/resource-library/plant-week/holly-skypencil-6-4-10.aspx>

7. Using one or more plant apps on your phone, identify the following plants. Identify the other plants from different characteristics (leaf, bark, flower, etc.) Do you agree with the answers on the various apps? What other resources might you use?

7a. What kind of tree is this?



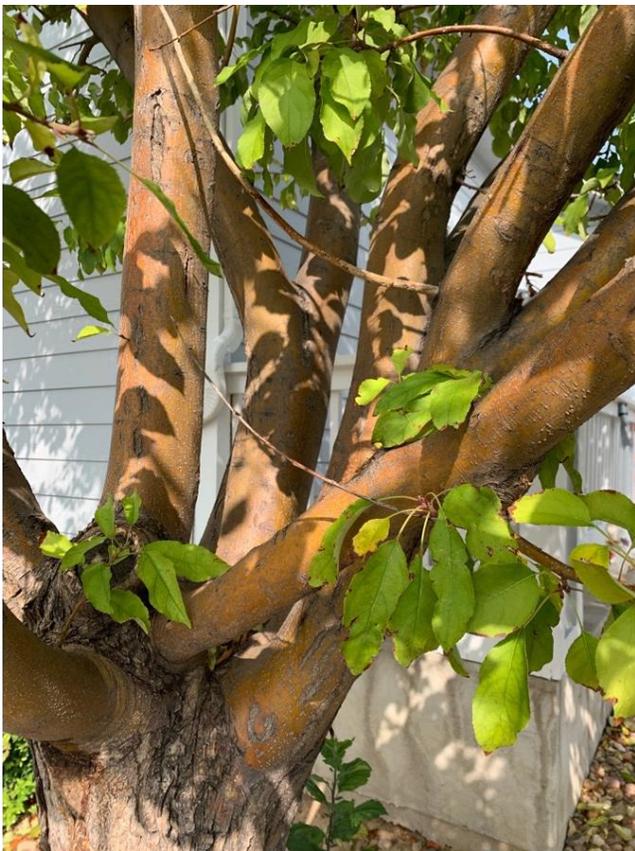
7b. This succulent is so pretty and is covering the hillside behind my house. Where can I get more?



7c. This plant is popping up all over my vegetable garden. What is it?



7d. Our HOA said they need to remove this tree – Why?



7e. I received this flower in a Mother's Day bouquet, and I want to grow it in my landscape. Can you identify it?



Answers 7a-e

- a. White or Green Ash *Fraxinus americana* or *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*
- b. Myrtle spurge *Euphorbia myrsinites*. List "A" Colorado Noxious Weeds
- c. Curly dock *Rumex crispus*
- d. Crabapple *Malus sp.* Tree in question has fireblight – however that is not shown in the picture
- e. Lisianthus *Eustoma grandiflorum*. Zone is 8-10. (planted as an annual in Colorado)

What constitutes a good picture? What characteristics of the plant do you need to see to make an accurate identification to lead to a good diagnosis?

Plant ID apps should be used in conjunction with/verified by other resources.

8. I planted my Sensation Maple in 2016 and it has been beautiful. I just noticed it is literally dripping. When checking it, the trunk is wet all the way around towards the top and as it goes down more toward the east side of tree. The east side seems less watery but other places is definitely sappy. And it really is dripping off the branches. What can I do??

This is normal for maples this time of year. While we don't tap boxelder (the species of your Sensation maple), all maples start to get their "juices flowing" in spring and the sap will find cracks in the trunk and ooze out. It's normal and there's nothing you need to do. Keep up the good cultural requirements for your tree, including regular water!

<https://landscapeplants.oregonstate.edu/plants/acer-negundo-sensation>

<https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/faq/sap-flowing-pruning-cut-my-maple-tree-should-i-be-concerned>

9. Will 'Baby Gem' Buxus evergreen grow well in Colorado?

<https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?taxonid=243326&isprofile=0&>

What are the common concerns with boxwood in Colorado? If not sited correctly, the plant can suffer sunscald and winter dessication.

10. Are Theta and Jefferson filbert trees grown in Zone 5? Will these trees have nuts on a consistent basis?

Corylus avellana 'Jefferson' or 'Theta' hazelnut trees are two varieties that are zone 5 hardy which is compatible with the Denver area. Soil pH requirements are 5.5 to 7.5. Anything above 7.5 might be too alkaline. These 2 varieties are immune to the common European Filbert Blight (EFB). You would need to plant two trees for cross pollination. Our front range climate with its winter freeze and thaw cycles and late blossom freezes are the reasons that not many nut trees are grown in this area. However, the filbert may be one of your best options. <https://ask2.extension.org/kb/faq.php?id=110703>

Additional Online Resources:

El Paso Guide online version: <https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/volunteer-information/cm-gardennotes-class-handouts/#WoodyID>

Garden Notes #171, 172, 173, 177

Online version of Weeds of the West <http://wyoextension.org/agpubs/pubs/wsws-1.pdf>

Plant ID dichotomous key: <https://gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org/full/>

Reverse Image Search: <https://images.google.com/>

Resources for purchase:

Weedy Grasses: https://pubsplus.illinois.edu/products/identifying-turf-weedy-grasses-of-northern-us?_pos=2&_psq=turf%20ID&_ss=e&_v=1.0