

Entomology & Plant Pathology Weekly Review, April 17

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Weekly Review for April 17, 2024

This informal report by the Division of Entomology & Plant Pathology is a commentary on insects, diseases, and curiosities division staff encounter on a week-to-week basis. Comments and questions about this report are welcome and can be sent to your respective Inspector.

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Jared Spokowsky (Nursery Inspector & Compliance Officer) - jspokowsky@dnr.IN.gov

Not much to report in the way of nursery finds. But I did stumble across some interesting bees this past week. Shortly before totality on Monday I found my kids gathered around looking at the ground. Upon further investigation I found a small mating swarm of cellophane bees. There were three to four females with about two dozen males aggressively competing with one another to mate. At totality they all dropped to the ground and became very docile. After the eclipse they resumed the competition.

On Tuesday while doing some spotted lanternfly egg-scraping work we happened to walk up on the largest cellophane bee colony I have ever seen. There were easily several thousand males patrolling tens of thousands of square feet of a south-facing slope at Memorial Park in Huntington. It was almost impossible to take a step without stepping on a burrow. Cellophane bee females excavate a burrow with several side chambers where individual larvae are raised on a pollen diet. For more information on cellophane bees see this [link](#) and [video](#) from Tufts Pollinator Initiative, and if anyone is close to Huntington go check out the colony at this [location](#), they won't hang around long.



Photo 1 – Two Male Cellophane bees compete to mate with a female



Photo 2 – Cellophane bee burrow excavation mound



Photo 3 – Female cellophane bee guarding the entrance to the burrow

Eric Biddinger (Nursery Inspector & Compliance Officer) - EBiddinger@dnr.IN.gov

As a follow on to Jared's swarm report on March 29 in southern Indiana, I received a call from a beekeeper on April 12 confirming a bee swarm in St. Joseph County.

Weather plays a critical role in a lot of what we do, from planting decisions to the timing of pesticide applications, so tracking it is a large part of what I do in the spring. The last time I wrote about this, northern Indiana was almost 20 days ahead of average. Thanks to that cool, rainy period last week, we are now much closer to "normal", though still a bit ahead. In the north part of the state, we are looking for spongy moth hatch sometime in the next 10 days and spotted lanternfly to follow in early to mid-May. I'm still warning folks not to get too carried away with planting their gardens as a significant risk of frost will exist for a while longer.

Angela Rust (Nursery Inspector & Compliance Officer) - ARust@dnr.IN.gov

As everyone starts heading out to buy plants this season, just a reminder that the **Terrestrial Plant Rule (312 IAC 18-3-25)** designates 44 species of plants as invasive pests. This rule makes it illegal to sell, gift, barter, exchange, distribute, transport, or introduce these plants in the state of Indiana. Learn what you need to know in the [Terrestrial Plant Rule Brochure](#). Please report sales of prohibited species to our division at our email depp@dnr.IN.gov or toll free at **1-866 NO EXOTIC** (1-866-663-9684).

Around April 5 I had a very beautiful visitor to my front porch and wanted to share a couple of photos of a male luna moth. They have always been a favorite of mine. Just look at the exquisite antennae!



Photo 4 – Luna moth male



Photo 5 – Luna moth male antennae

Eastern tent caterpillars are exploding and growing here in Perry County. I'm seeing caterpillars from $\frac{3}{4}$ inch to several around 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. I've included a photo of them in a nest in a crabapple tree and a photo of egg masses on a black cherry tree branch.



Photo 6 – Eastern tent caterpillar nest in crabapple tree



Photo 7 – Eastern tern caterpillar egg mass on black cherry

Phil Marshall (State Forest Health Specialist) - PMarshall@dnr.IN.gov

I observed eastern tent caterpillar webs in Clark County on April 14. The 4-inch-long web was in a black cherry sapling.

Ren Hall (Nursery Inspector & Compliance Officer) - RHall@dnr.IN.gov

Last week I took Monday off work to enjoy the total solar eclipse since my place in Indianapolis was in the path of totality. The pictures don't do it justice, seeing a total solar eclipse is an amazing experience. I remembered witnessing the partial eclipse in 2017 in Indianapolis but the total eclipse is a completely different and more intense experience that was really worth the hype in my opinion.



Photo 8 – Total solar eclipse

No reports this week

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