



What's Bugging You?

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SPRING INTO ACTION

Humans aren't the only species whose activity begins to increase as spring approaches and the mercury starts to rise. Insect activity picks up this time of year as well. The steps you take in the early spring to detect and control potential insect problems can go a long way towards making certain you have a worry-free growing season.

LEARN FROM HISTORY

Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it, so the saying goes. While usually thought of as advice for world leaders, it holds equally true when it comes to protecting your lawn and garden from pests. If you had an insect problem in a specific area last year, it is highly possible the problem could reappear this season.

Consult your local county extension agent to find out what steps might be taken to prevent a recurrence of last year's troubles. For some trees that had infestations, the use of a dormant oil spray may be in order to control any eggs that may have spent the winter there, waiting to emerge in the spring. Another valuable strategy is simply to keep an extra close eye on areas that had problems last year, as early detection will give you a leg up on keeping the problem under control all season long.

THE EARLY BIRD STOPS THE WORM

While especially true for areas with a history of trouble, keeping a close eye on the entire lawn and garden early in the spring can also help stop pest problems before they start.

"Each spring, it's a good idea just to take a walk around your yard and the outside of your house and look for any insects or signs of activity," says John Ferrell, a county extension agent in

Welcome to the first issue in the second year of *What's Bugging You?* Throughout the spring and summer, you will receive information to pass along to homeowners and readers, including pest control tips and spotlights on specific problem insects. If you have questions or comments, please direct them to Gini Dietrich at 312-787-7249.

Winchester, Tenn. "If you know what's going on early, you'll be less likely to be surprised later on."

In lawns, round patches of brown grass that appear flattened or several small brown patches close together are possible indications of a problem. In trees and shrubs, keep an eye out for small holes in trunks or branches and any damage to emerging leaves. Find out what pests tend to be particularly active in your area, and what other early signs might indicate their presence.

NIP PESTS IN THE BUD

When you locate an insect problem, make certain to identify the species. The more information you have about the specific pest and its life cycle, the easier it will be to pinpoint the most effective time for treatment.

"Identifying the exact type of pest you have is absolutely critical to treating it properly," says Ferrell. "Each pest is different, so treatment methods will vary. Consult your local county agent if you come across a pest you are unable to identify and they will be glad to assist you." The more problems you address early on, the less you will have to worry about later in the summer.

PEST SPOTLIGHT: TENT CATERpillARS



The eastern tent caterpillar gets its name from the tent-like nests they construct in the forks of trees in the springtime. They are particularly common in cherry and other fruit trees, but also have been known to inhabit oak, maple, and other shady forest trees.

A related species, the forest tent caterpillar, is also common to oaks and maples, though they actually reside in pad-like nests on trunks and branches rather than the forked nests of their cousins. Both caterpillars are hairy and about two inches in length, with irregular blue and white mottling. The eastern tent caterpillar has a black body, while the forest tent caterpillar's is brown.

Neither species is likely to cause enough damage to kill a healthy tree, but they can be a nuisance, especially to fruit trees, as their feeding will defoliate significant areas of the tree. They spend the winters in bundles of 100 to 300 eggs that look like shiny brown bands encircling trees.

If detected, these can be removed in the late fall or winter to prevent the problem. If nests begin to emerge, one option is to hand-remove them, especially in the early stages, though gloves are recommended as they sometimes irritate the skin. Some insecticides, such as carbaryl, the active ingredient in Sevin® brand insecticide, also are highly effective.

PEST SPOTLIGHT: WHITE FLIES



There are essentially two main U.S. varieties of white flies, a small, powdery white, moth-like insect. The citrus white fly is more common in southern states and persists year round, while the greenhouse white fly typically goes dormant in the winter. Their presence creates a problem in two ways. First, they relentlessly suck sap from trees and shrubs, causing unsightly leaf damage and lowering the plant's resistance to infestation and disease. Secondly, they excrete honeydew onto the plants, which attracts other pests that feed on it and subject the plant to further damage. The honeydew itself also can contribute to mold and other problems.

For wintering populations, plowing the soil in the springtime can destroy the pupae waiting to emerge as adults and curb some of the population. Glue traps, which have a bright yellow glue and attract the white flies, can catch some reproductives before they lay eggs, and also serve as an alarm that a population is active around one of your plants.

If you find one of your plants has a problem with a white fly population, apply an insecticide such as carbaryl, the active ingredient in Sevin, according to the instructions on the package. White flies tend to hide on the undersides of leaves, so be sure to cover the affected plant thoroughly.

This month's newsletter was written with the help of www.thegardenhelper.com.

As with all insecticides, please read and follow the use instructions on the package. For more information about insects and/or carbaryl, log on to www.gardentech.com

For more information, please contact Gini Dietrich at (312) 787-7249 or info@armentdietrich.com.

