Red Ewald, Inc., Karnes City, Tex., is operating from this new centralized location. A manufacturer of equipment for the chemical, petroleum and food industries, Ewald held open house this spring. The main building, 8,400 sq. ft., houses offices, parts, shipping, and repair. Manufacturing of fiberglass products, such as spray tanks, is housed in two buildings totaling 12,600 sq. ft. The steel division makes trailers in a 7,500 sq. ft. building.

Systemics Not Cure-Alls, Says New Mexico's Durkin

Systemic insecticides are valuable in protecting ornamentals from pests, but they have their limitations, says John J. Durkin, entomologist at New Mexico State University.

Systemic insecticides do not kill as broad a spectrum of pests as most contact insecticides. In general, they only control sucking pests such as aphids, leafhoppers, spider mites, and some scales. Systemics will kill few chewing insects, unless by contact, but not by systemic action. Read the label for a list of pests the material will kill.

The three systemic insecticides available for home garden use are Di-Syston for soil application and Cygon and Meta-Systox-R for foliar application. Di-Syston is sold as a granular material and in various fertilizer formulations. Cygon and Meta-Systox-R are liquid concentrates that should be mixed with water and applied as sprays.

A plant must be growing well to take full advantage of the systemic activity of a chemical, says Durkin. Plants stressed by heavy insect or mite populations, or by lack of water or nutrients, will not translocate the chemical. Vigorous plant growth is especially necessary with the soil-applied systemic. Cygon and MSR will kill on contact at time of spraying, but may not give the length of protection desired if the plant is stressed.

Don't expect systemics to control pests on flowering parts, he adds. In most treated plants, the concentration of insecticide is too low in flower petals to be effective. Although a soil application of Di-Syston will kill thrips on the leaves of a rose, it will not give adequate control in open flowers.

Soil-applied systemics are relatively slow in killing an established infestation, Durkin continued. The materials must be thoroughly watered into the root zone. Then, several hours to a few days may be required for the plant to absorb and translocate a high enough concentration to kill the pests at their feeding site.

For best results with systemic insecticides, apply them before sucking pests are a problem and at a time when plants are beginning to grow vigorously, advises Durkin. Plants that produce an abundance of foliage during the summer may require periodic treatments.

During a recent visit to Amsterdam's annual Agricultural Exhibition, Prince Claus, the husband of Crown Princess Beatrix of The Netherlands, spied Toro's 8 hp lawn tractor. Like the average homeowner, he couldn't resist playing farmer. He climbed aboard and took a ride. His reaction - "Nice little machine. It certainly is a lot more efficient than the sheep my ancestors had to keep the grass in trim."

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