Raster patterns of grubs
Problem: Is there an easy way to identify different white grubs in the lawn, particularly the Japanese beetle, Northern masked and European chafer grubs? (Michigan)

Solution: The best way to distinguish different grubs is to examine the "raster" pattern, which is the arrangement of small hairs on the last body segments. To examine, hold a grub upside-down and observe the arrangement of the raster pattern.

In the case of Japanese beetle larvae, the raster pattern is V-shaped. The Northern masked chafer's raster pattern doesn't have any specific shape, and the hairs are arranged irregularly. The raster pattern in European chafer grubs is funnel-shaped.

Antidessicant sprays
Problem: We are having problems with winter injury on broad-leaved and narrow-leaved evergreens in our nursery. Would you recommend antidessicant sprays to protect from winter injury? If so, which product and when is the best time? Any other suggestions would be appreciated. (Colorado)

Solution: Maintaining good-looking healthy evergreen plants through cold winter is a problem with many nurseries growing plants in the ground and/or containers. Although a number of antitranspirant (antidessicant) products are marketed to protect the plants from winter injury, reports suggest that these products are not effective.

Research has shown that antidessicants sprayed in the fall failed to protect plants during most winters. But cultural practices provided at the right time of the year can make a difference in appearance and quality of broad-leaved and narrow-leaved evergreens in open nurseries or landscapes.

This involves deeply watering plants during fall and again before the ground freezes. An application of nitrogen fertilizer after the first frost is also beneficial. Reportedly, this would provide adequate reserve of nitrogen in plant stems, roots and buds to minimize leaf drop due to nitrogen translocating from older leaves to branch terminals. Also, consider mulching 2 to 3 inches deep to protect root surfaces from cold temperatures.

Where feasible, the plants can also be protected by installing a wood or burlap barrier for protection.

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Mail questions to “Ask the Expert,” LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130. Please allow two to three months for an answer to appear in the magazine.