

Dichondra Pests and Controls Outlined in Council Bulletin

Listing of the garden pests which attack dichondra, that highly valued and lush southern California ground cover, along with chemical methods of control of the attackers, appears in an article in the July number of *California Turfgrass Culture*. Authors are R. N. Jefferson and A. S. Deal, professors of entomology at the Riverside campus of the University of California.

"Insecticides should be applied only when a pest is present in sufficient numbers to cause damage," the authors believe. Since many insects are normally found in dichondra lawns, and the effects of lack of care and insect infestations may appear similar, one should confirm the presence of insect infestations before insecticides are applied.

DDT and toxaphene will control cutworms as will Dow's carbamate insecticide, Zectran. Cutworms are 1- to 2-inch long, fat-bodied caterpillars, colored dull green, gray, brown, or black (sometimes with stripes), which feed on leaves and crown of new dichondra plants.

"Dichondra injury occurs most

often during summer and early fall months, and is most severe in warm inland areas," the authors disclose. A new lawn with maturing caterpillars can be seriously injured in 2 to 3 days.

Jefferson and Deal recommend a 1% pyrethrum solution in a gallon of water to bring caterpillars to the lawn surface where they can be counted and damage potential assessed. For new dichondra lawns, the authors suggest seeding before May or after September, so young seedlings will be spared the height of cutworm activity.

A new pest discovered in 1962 is a chrysomelid flea beetle. Adults are black and small, 1/25-inch long. They feed on upper leaf surfaces and skeletonize the leaves.

Sprays containing DDT applied at doses recommended for cutworms will control flea beetles when foliage and ground surface is thoroughly sprayed.

New Moth Pest Uncovered

Slender spotted caterpillars which look like lawn moth larvae (only larger), have been reported damaging dichondra lawns in some southern California counties. Unlike lawn moth

larvae, lucerne moth larvae wiggle actively when disturbed.

Jefferson and Deal suggest Zectran at 3 pints to 100 gallons of water for control of this moth pest since neither DDT nor Sevin appears effective.

Dichondra is beset by vegetable weevil grubs during winter and early spring. Recovery is slow after heavy infestations because dichondra slows growth at this time, the entomologists report.

The grubs are small, green, legless larvae, 3/8-inch long. They feed on foliage at night, and hide in soil in the daytime. Infestations are usually localized because adult weevils cannot fly.

Treatment is warranted if more than an occasional grub is found feeding at night. Sprays of malathion, dieldrin or Zectran are effective controls, according to Jefferson and Deal.

Malathion should be applied at rates recommended for scale insects, dieldrin at rates for thrips and weevils, and Zectran at rates recommended for snails and slugs, to control vegetable weevil grubs.

Spider mites are tiny (1/50-inch long) sap-sucking pests. They cause a speckling of leaves. Later, as leaves dry up, the mites spin fine webs around the affected plants.

Spider mites on dichondra can be controlled with Kelthane or Dimite. At least 2 applications 2 weeks apart are necessary for control.

The common brown garden snail will take baits containing metaldehyde. Slugs do not respond to baits as well. Both pests can be controlled with repeated applications of Zectran. Areas where the pests gather should be drenched with spray.

Jefferson and Deal state that one should not apply insecticide sprays to dichondra when the lawn needs water. Fertilization and adequate watering before any insecticide application guards against injury. One should also wait until foliage is dry before spraying insecticide. Temperatures above 90°F may cause spray to injure turf.

Mott Offers Mower-Renovator

A new hammer-knife mower, with free-swinging, replaceable blades, slices through thick matted growth to provide aeration and greater soil moisture absorption, Mott Corp. says. Renovating shoe on the new device permits cutting adjustment to the ground or slightly below.

Manufactured in two models, B-9 and B-32, the machines cut swaths of 24 and 32 inches, respectively, and can also be used for mowing fine turf and weedy areas, and for leaf mulching.

Free-swinging knives fold back on contact with obstructions, and then automatically return to cutting position. Throwing of struck objects is minimized with this feature, the company says.

The machines are self-propelled, with two forward speeds and reverse. An 8 1/4-hp. engine

provides power. Optional features include solid or pneumatic tires, dual wheels, riding sulky, 12-volt starter, leaf attachment, front wheels, and discharge shields. Detailed information is available from the company at 500 Shawmut Ave., La Grange, Ill.



Free-swinging, replaceable knives make it possible for this machine to renovate or aerate lawns, mow fine turf or weedy areas, and also perform leaf mulching chores, according to Mott Corp.