Get ready for renovation work

Much of July's work is follow-up on spring work. It is when insecticide, herbicide, and fungicide applications are renewed, evergreens are pruned and shaped, and irrigation is closely monitored.

From a planning standpoint, July is when you should nail down fall renovation work and order the necessary supplies. Do not assume everything you need for renovation work will be available. Sell renovation work early in July and notify your suppliers as soon as possible of your needs. Winterkill replacements earlier in the year and reported shortages in some turf seed may limit the renovation work you can do this year.

Labor planning is especially important, considering how valuable renovation work can be while, at the same time, seasonal labor is departing. Quite often renovation work in August and the fall is more important than work during the busy season. By August, seasonal crews are skilled and more efficient than they would be the following spring. Work is therefore more efficient from both labor and plant standpoints.

Chemical renewal

Preemergence herbicides in plant beds and container plantings may need to be reapplied now. Check the label for the length of time the preemergence herbicide you use is effective.

Second applications of turf insecticides may also be needed in July to control severe grub, chinchbug, and greenbug infestations.

Many foliage-feeding and sucking insects are at harmful levels in July. Injury during the summer reduces carbohydrate storage by plants leaving plants more vulnerable to winterkill and reducing bud development. Serious foliage feeders include Japanese beetle, gypsy moth, black vine weevil and bag worms. Control is most effective when insects are small. Controls include Sevin, Turcam, Orthene, Diazinon, and methoxychlor. Sucking insects include spider mites, aphids, white flies, and lace bugs. Mite control requires Dicofol, dymet, or Vendex. Malathion, Orthene, Diazinon, dimethoate and Sevin may be used for the other sucking insects. These materials are also effective against the crawler stages of scale insects active at this time.

Hot, humid weather encourages a number of turf diseases, including pythium, anthracnose of *Poa annua*, *Fusarium* blight, and brown patch. Since poor drainage is a prime cause of these diseases, make a note to improve drainage and air flow of problem areas this fall. Turf fungicides typically have residual periods of less than three weeks. Bayleton, a fungicide with season-long residual must be applied before diseases start, usually sometime in early June. Not all fungicides are effective on all turf diseases. Check with your chemical supplier, the Disease Control Guide in this issue, or local extension agent for specific control information.

Most ornamental disease control is based on control beginning prior to or following bloom. Roses require treatment every two weeks during the summer for black spot and powdery mildew. Preventative spray programs should be established for susceptible plants.

Irrigation

The role of irrigation in landscape management is being closely evaluated today. Water-sensing devices called tensiometers are being added to irrigation systems to reduce water use. Drip irrigation can greatly reduce water use for ornamentals. Wetting agents are gaining acceptance to correct localized dry spots. Plant breeders are selecting plants which require less water. Water use is no longer taken lightly.

As mentioned in a previous issue, Dr. Joe Vargas, plant pathlogist from Michigan State University, is recommending light, mid-day irrigation to encourage an active thatch layer. Vargas believe beneficial organisms, which aid in thatch and disease control, are most effective if the thatch layer is not allowed to dry out. Irrigation should be brief, just to moisten the thatch, at mid-day so leaf tissue does not remain damp for long periods.

Dr. Robert Shearman of the University of Nebraska, is recommending irrigation at the first signs of wilt. Then, Shearman recommends a deep soaking to encourage deep rooting and lower disease potential.

Pruning conifers, pines

The best time to prune conifers and pines is July. Shearing half the candle growth results in a denser plant, and if done every year, produces a dwarf plant. This is helpful to keep plants within their intended size and shape in the landscape design.

Juniper, yew, and privet hedges can be shaped at this time. For best foliage appearance, the lower branches should be longer than the top so that all foliage receives adequate sunlight. Otherwise, lower branches will have sparse foliage. **WT&T**

Landscape Log is written based on previous publications by Dow Gardens Horticulturist Douglas Chapman, the Weed Control from March 1983, and the Disease Control Guide in this issue.