PROBLEM SOLVERS

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Red thread control

Problem: *I understand that Bayleton can control red thread disease. Does this mean that it will control both the newly described red thread (Laetisaria fuciformis) and pink patch (Limonomyces roseipellis), or will it control the old name red thread (Corticium fuciforme)? (Maryland)*

Solution: Reports indicate that Bayleton will control the red thread disease caused by *Laetisaria fuciformis* (new name) or *Corticium fuciforme* (old name). It will not control pink patch caused by *Limonomyces roseipellis* (new name).

Therefore, to properly manage these problems, it is important to identify the disease first. The following discussion may help you to distinguish these two newly described diseases.

Recently, turfgrass pathologists renamed red thread disease caused by *Corticium fuciforme* (old name) into pink patch (*Limonomyces roseipellis*) and red thread (*Laetisaria fuciformis*). Both these agents can affect *Lolium* sp. and *Fertuca* sp. but only red thread is reported to affect *Agrostis* sp. and *Poa* sp.

Since pink patch spreads slower than red thread, it will be less severe and won't affect the growth rate of turfgrass. Leaves will be covered with pink, membraneous mycelial growth. Pink patch differs from red thread by the lack of red, thread-like mycelial growth on leaf tips and the pink, cottony flocks of anthroconidia. Pink patch disease can be managed by cultural practices such as proper mowing and feeding programs.

The red thread disease can be prevalent during spring and autumn on slow-growing, nitrogen-deficient turf. The fungal agent kills the affected blades and then pink- or reddish-colored threads protrude from the tip of the leaves. When the disease is active following humid weather, the diseased areas appear reddish-brown. If the disease is severe, provide adequate supplemental nutrients in addition to fungicides to manage the disease.

Desert vegetation

Problem: *Can you provide some information on shrubs, flowers, and greenery that can withstand the heat (110 to 115 degrees Fahrenheit) in the Southwest Low Desert in Phoenix, Arizona? (Arizona)*

Solution: Native Palo Verde trees are well adapted to desert conditions. Although they drop their leaves during drought periods to conserve moisture, their green bark continues the photosynthesis and prepares food. They tolerate intense sunshine and temperature extremes.

There are three species which are adapted and found in the deeper, sandier soils: Mexican Palo Verde (*Parkinsonia aculeata*), Blue Verde (*Cercidium floridum*) and Foothills Palo Verde (*Cercidium Microphyllum*).

Palo Verde trees can be used as shade trees or around patios when they are pruned higher. They do poorly in lawn areas because of too much water. However, among the three species, Blue Verde does better than the other two in a lawn situation.

Other plants which can be grown in your area are deciduous shrubs and broad-leaved evergreens. There are a number of plants which can be selected for a specific purpose such as hedges, shrubs, and groundcovers.

Still another group of plants which are well apapted to desert conditions are cactus, Agave, Yucca and Ocotillo. Contact your local cooperative extension service and request publications on these landscape plants.

Attacking borer problems

Problem: *Do any systemic insecticides go after the borers once they have gotten inside the wood of trees? We have some real problems with shot hole borers in elms, clearwing moths in willows, and flatheads in conifers. (California).*

Solution: Generally, systemic insecticides do not work well for borer problems in plants. Systemic materials move through xylem-conductive tissue and perhaps there is not enough concentration of pesticides near the inner phloem tissues to kill the larvae.

The better approach is to apply pesticides externally on target host plants such as elms, and protect them either from pest infestation or reinfestation. The application should be aimed and timed properly to get rid of the adult population before they have a chance to lay eggs, as well as to get rid of the larvae soon after they hatch and enter into the trunk.

The clearwing moth group includes a number of distinctive pests such as the rhododendron borer, dogwood borer, oak borer, ash borer, willow borer, and poplar borer.

Like other borer problems, managing the clearwing moth on willow (*Aegeria tibialis*) would be difficult by the use of systemic insecticides. Lindane applications on the trunks at monthly intervals from May to August is recommended for general borer problems on willows. This might be useful in dealing with the problems on willows in your area.

We have seen flathead borers on deciduous trees such as apple, but have not seen them on conifers. Contact your local cooperative extension service personnel for more information on all of the above problems and specific pest management guidelines.

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Questions should be mailed to Problem Solver, Weeds Trees & Turf, 7500 Old Oak Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44130. Please allow 2-3 months for an answer to appear in the magazine.