

# ASK THE EXPERT

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## Wood chips and termites

**Problem:** Could hardwood chips placed around shrubs near the foundation of a house become a source of termite infestation? (New Jersey)

**Solution:** We are aware of one report that termites infested large bark nuggets. The report did not mention whether these were subterranean or drywood termites. It is highly unlikely, however, that the subterranean termites found in your area would infest the wood chips generated by a chipper. Subterranean termites need warm air and moist conditions to survive.

If the shrubs are infested, there is a remote possibility that termites could be moved through the chips. However, if only worker termites are present and no queen, the population will not increase.

Reports indicate that there is a potential injury from the use of fresh wood chips. Fungi and bacteria use nitrogen from fresh wood chips. This affects the nitrogen-to-carbon ratio, resulting in nitrogen depletion. Fresh wood chips release several phenolic compounds and acids as they decompose which can be detrimental to root systems.

If you are intending to use fresh wood chips, use a very thin layer, no more than two to three inches thick. Composted products are better in the long run.

## Removing herbicide stains

**Problem:** We have a problem in which cars, aluminum siding and driveways are stained due to drift from pendimethalin (Scott's Weedgrass Control 60 WP or Lesco's Pre-M 60D9). We have also had incidents of stained furniture, linoleum and carpeting from product tracked in by the kids or the dog. How is the stain removed? (Michigan)

**Solution:** Pre-M pre-emergence herbicide contains pendimethalin, which is a dinitroaniline. This is a group known to stain. The staining from Pre-M is difficult to remove. If non-target areas are sprayed or contaminated, rinse the surface immediately with water to prevent the stain from setting.

According to product development personnel from Lesco O.M. Scotts, and the basic manufacturer, American Cyanamid, there is no easy way to remove the stain. The following information should help:

- **STAINS ON POROUS SURFACES** (unwaxed linoleum, fabric, carpets)
- If exposed to sunlight the color will fade in two to six weeks.
- For quicker results, consider using soap and water or an ammonia-based household cleaner within two hours.

### STAINS ON NON-POROUS SURFACES

- If the stain has set, you could try a rubbing compound (the kind that is used on car paint touch-ups).
- If the stain has set, it is difficult to remove.
- Ammoniated household cleaner within two hours.
- Tanning lamp may eventually "bleach" the stain away.

- Magnum stain remover *may* work.

- Midco FL-85 (3 parts water/1 part FL-85); two to three applications may be necessary.

### STAIN REMOVERS

**Magnum** (Spectrum Technologies): A citrus-based solution which probably won't damage the treated surface.

**Midco FL-85** cleaner/degreaser: This is a heavy-duty engine solvent. Midco's FL-85 can be diluted from 10 parts water and 1 part FL-85 to 3 parts water and 1 part FL-85, depending on the surface to be cleaned and the severity of the stain.

### FL-85 dilution rates for cleaning different materials

Material	Dilution Rate (Water: FL-85)
concrete	7:1
fiberglass tanks	4:1
aluminum	3:1
cloth *	3:1

\* Two to three applications are necessary

Please note: FL-85 at higher concentrations has the ability to remove finishes from surfaces. A 3:1 dilution will remove the finish from linoleum. Our tests also indicated that FL-85 at higher concentrations may dissolve certain types of plastic materials. You may want to test the product on a small area of the surface to be cleaned before it's applied to larger areas.

The best results were obtained when diluted FL-85 was applied using a hand sprayer. Allow about five minutes for the cleaner to penetrate the stain, scrub with a soft bristle brush and then give the surface a clean water rinse. Stubborn stains take two or more applications.

FL-85 is a solvent-type cleaner. Using gloves and cleaning in a well-ventilated area is recommended. Likewise, FL-85 may injure plant material. If FL-85 will potentially come in contact with plant material, thoroughly dilute (rinse) the solution after cleaning.

## Treating for spittlebugs

**Problem:** We see frothy looking things on a number of pines. Are they spittlebugs? (Michigan)

**Solution:** Based on the description of the problem, it appears to be related to spittlebug insect activity.

To manage this pest, treat the pines when bugs appear and spittle mass is evident, usually about May to July. Insecticides such as Orthene, Dursban, Sevin, Turcam or Tempo can be used. Read and follow label specifications for good results.

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Questions should be mailed to ASK THE EXPERT, LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, 7500 Old Oak Boulevard, Cleveland, OH 44130. Please allow 2-3 months for an answer to appear in the magazine.