

Golf course geese

On our golf course, we have problems with Canada geese. Is there anything we can use to keep them away from the golf course area?

—PENNSYLVANIA

Canada geese are a problem in many well-maintained turfgrass areas. Large number of geese can cause damage to turfgrass from their overgrazing and unsanitary droppings. In addition, the runoff from these areas may produce a high coliform bacterial count in nearby bodies of water. The damaged turfgrass may be unsightly and may require overseeding.

To manage the problem, consider repellents such as ReJex-It AG-36. This product is a taste aversion agent. Follow the label guidelines for specific rates, mixing and application guidelines. Product efficacy is based on proper rate and application. Consider using a "sticker," which helps the product adhere to the turfgrass.

The label recommends a Bond spreader-sticker. Other brand stickers might also work well.

Thoroughly treat the area and allow the material to dry before entering the treated area. Repeat as needed at four-day intervals.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: ReJex-It is manufactured by PMC Specialties Group, Inc., of Cincinnati. Phone number there is 513-242-3300.)

Cure for dying Taxus?

We have a row of five mature (5- to 6-year-old) Taxus (yew) plants in a house foundation area. The middle three are dead, and the two end trees are showing foliar discoloration. The client suspects that the cause is lawn herbicides. They want us to replace the dead trees with similar-sized plants. Because of the possibility of diseases, we do not want to do that. What do you suggest?

—MARYLAND

It is very unlikely that lawn-applied herbicides caused the decline. Generally, if a woody ornamental gets contaminated, it will produce a twisting, cupping of leaves on new growth. The concentration of broadleaf herbicide applied on lawns for herbaceous weed management is not high enough to cause serious adverse effects on ornamentals.

Examine the new growth on non-target plants for possible herbicide injury. Also, check for specific patterns of injury on suspected plants.

Taxus plants are extremely sensitive to poorly-drained soils, resulting in "wet feet" disorders (also known as the "bathtub effect"). This "wet feet" disorder can be caused by excess water from downspouts of homes that does not drain quickly because of sidewalks or nearby roads. This can drown and suffocate the root system. In addition to direct injury from excess soil water, these stressed plants become more susceptible to certain diseases and insects.

Based on the information you have given, there are a few possibilities. Study the dead and declining plants on site. Examine the soil and root system for possible root rot caused by *Phytophthora* sp. and/or *Armillaria* sp. Smell the soil and look for bluish-black roots with a marsh-gas—or methane—odor. This suggests the possibility of root rot disease. These two diseases also establish on poorly-drained, heavy clay soils. Check the soil environment.

For further confirmation, you may need to send root samples to diagnostic clinics for diagnosis and recommendations. For *Phytophthora* root rot disease, a fungicide such as Subdue or Alliette can be used. No fungicide products are available for *Armillaria* sp.

The other possibility is that the damage is caused by black vine weevil. Adult weevils make c-shaped cuts on foliage; larvae feed on roots. Larval feeding can kill the plant. Therefore, examine the needles for possible black vine weevil feeding damage. For this pest, use products such as Orthene around mid-June and provide two more applications at three-week intervals to help manage the adults. It is very difficult to manage the larvae once they become soil-inhabiting and root-feeding pests. **LM**



BALAKRISHNA RAO
 Manager of Research and
 Technical Development
 for the Davey Tree Co.
 Kent, Ohio

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"Ask the Expert"
 Landscape Management
 7500 Old Oak Blvd.
 Cleveland, OH 44130

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