The Merits of Merit

We are thinking of using Merit insecticide for grub control. Our question is, how late in the season can we use it? Secondly, how critical is post-watering? Many clients don't water as they are instructed, so what should we expect?

-PENNSYLVANIA

A representative from Bayer suggests that Merit can be applied from late July through mid-August—with irrigation or post-watering. Products such as Dylox, Triumph or Oftanol can be used after August 15th.

If the treated area cannot be watered or irrigated after treatments, Bayer representatives suggest applying the product during early spring to early summer, as the results depend on the amount of rainfall received.

Merit is a good product, like many other insecticides. Most products, however, require post-watering to move the product from the turfgrass surface to the thatch/soil interface area where grubs feed. Without water, the results may vary.

Read and follow label specifications for best results.

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO:

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

Please allow two to three months for an answer to appear in the magazine.

Treating fireblight

Mountain ash plants in some of our clients' properties are not looking good. Some terminal branches with discolored leaves are dying back. On some branches, leaves were completely eaten by some insects, but there are no insects now. Any idea on the problems and how to control them?

-NEW YORK

The first problem of discolored foliage appears to be related to a disease called fireblight, which is caused by a bacterium. Affected branch terminals can be killed and remain slightly bent like an inverted "u." This symptom-referred to as "shepherds crook"—is typical of this disease. Often, the leaves on affected branches remain attached even during winter. Similar problems can be found on many other plants in the rosaceous family, including plants such as mountain ash, apple, crabapple, cottonester, pyracantha and pear.

To manage the fireblight, consider treating the susceptible plants with antibiotics such as streptomycin during early spring, starting when flowers bloom. Repeat treatments at least two to three times to prevent further spread of the disease. Also, affected branches should be pruned about one foot below the discolored area to help minimize the disease spread and reduce inoculum.

Prune during dry periods, and disinfect the pruning tools in rubbing alcohol, Lysol or Clorox between cuts to minimize the disease spread.

The other problem where leaves were chewed off appears to be caused by mountain ash sawfly. Treat foliage about two weeks after the petals fall and again in two weeks with insecticides such as Sevin, Dursban, Orthene, M-Pede or Tempo.

Read and follow label specifications for best results.

Meals for mealys

We maintain a number of large commercial properties that have many annual and perennial flowering plants. Some, like impatiens, coleus and other succulents, have insect problems. The insects are white in color and generally found in the area where the leaves are attached to the plant. What are these, and how can we get rid of them?

-NEW JERSEY

From your description, they appear to be related to an insect called mealy bug. These insects are white, have a woolly cover and appear at the nodal region (where leaves are attached to the stem). They are soft and generally hidden from bright sunlight.

While feeding, these insects suck the plant sap and secrete honeydew from their last body segments (read end). This honeydew is sticky and can support a secondary fungi called sooty mold.

Sooty mold is black and grows on leaves using the sugar from the honeydew. The mold indirectly affects the overall health of plants by reducing sunlight.

To manage mealy bugs, consider using an insecticide such as Tempo or Dursban. Start treating when you see the insect and repeat as necessary.

Read and follow label specifications for best results. **LM**



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