

## Scales infest oaks

*We are finding scale-like structures on twigs, as well as on the trunks of our oak trees. They are mostly grouped, generally laying one over the other. The areas where they are found are slightly sunken. Some have small, black dots on the center of what looks like a scale cover. What are these? How do we manage them?*

—MARYLAND

From your description it appears that your problem is related to a scale and most likely it is obscure scale. Obscure scale is commonly found on species of oak, chestnut and hickory. They have also been reported on beech, maple, dogwood and willow. Obscure scale is most prevalent in the southern United States.

With one generation per year, obscure scale completes growth around mid August on white oak and mid July on red oak. On pin oak, the crawler activity peaks during July then declines, only to have another surge in August.

Managing obscure scale is difficult because the scales grow in clusters with one laying on the other. The layers make pesticide penetration to the target crawlers difficult. Also, they lay eggs over a long period of time and there is an extended period of crawler activity. Crawlers can settle under the layers of scale clusters; therefore, they are not readily exposed to insecticide treatment. They overwinter in the partly grown adult stage (second instars).

There are a few parasites and predators of this scale that may be effective as biological agents or you can treat the infested trees with horticultural oil. Thorough coverage of twigs and trunks is needed. Because they grow in clusters, the horticultural oil may not penetrate deep enough to manage all of the scales. Therefore, in the spring treat again with insecticides such as Malathion or Sevin. Of course, read and follow label directions.

Scientists are researching the feasibility of using systemic products such as Merit insecticide to manage scales. Continued research should help answer questions in managing these difficult and destructive pests.

## Stumped over sprouts

*Some clients do not want their stumps to be removed by grinding. Quite often we find sprouts growing from cut surfaces. In some cases we even find suckers on the roots. How can we manage these problems?*

—MICHIGAN

Use Roundup in an undiluted form or up to a 50 percent solution with water to manage sprouts growing from the cut surface of a stump. Treatments should be made immediately after cutting the tree. Apply Roundup on the cut surfaces along the edges of the trunk on the cambial layer. Use a hand sprayer. There is no need to apply all over the stump. Recutting the stump and then treating may be re-

quired if there is more than a one-hour delay.

Roundup may not be effective if a tree is removed during winter. Pathfinder II (Garlon, which contains trichlopyr) can be used. Generally, this may require a different type of pesticide applicator license, so make sure you have the proper license.

To manage sprouts on cut stumps near a body of water (ponds, rivers, streams, lakes), consider formulations such as Accord or Rodeo. Roundup can't be used near a body of water. Again, make sure your pesticide applicator license allows you to use these products.

## Do organics leach?

*Do organic fertilizers, such as the one containing powder blue, leach? Do we need to apply more fertilizer in sandy soils than we would use in clay soils? Or, should we increase the frequency of fertilization?*

—NEW YORK

Organic fertilizers containing powder blue can leach to some degree, but at a much lower extent and not so readily as the inorganic quick-release fertilizers. When using the above product in sandy soils, use the recommended rate but increase the frequency of your treatment schedule. This to compensate the fertilizer loss due to leaching through sandy soils. Where feasible, incorporate some organic mulches through methods like vertical mulching.



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