

Managing holly leaf miner

We have had a problem managing holly leaf miner. What is the best strategy for managing this pest? Do they have two generations like birch leaf miners?

—PENNSYLVANIA

Unlike the birch leaf miner, which has two generations, the holly leaf miner has only one generation per year. Holly leaf miner eggs are laid on the under-surface of leaves. The adult female makes "pin-prick" holes with her ovipositor and lays eggs around early May. Eggs hatch into larvae, which feed very slowly and remain inside the mines all summer. They do not feed to any extent until late winter and early spring. They then pupate in the leaves and the small black and gray flies emerge.

Ideally, applications of insecticides such as Orthene should be provided in early May against the egg-laying adults. The birch leaf miner is active earlier so don't try to treat both problems at the same time of year.

Consider using sticky pheromone traps to monitor the adult activity. This will help fine-tune your treatment timing. The use of phenology (blooming of indicator plants) may also help fine-tune your treatment timings. When red-buds produce flowers, the adult activity also can be found.

Depending on how extensive the feeding damage is, it may be a good idea to fertilize,

water and mulch to help improve plant health. If the feeding damage is extensive, it can weaken the plant considerably.

Read and follow label specifications, and treat as needed.

Fertilize in the fall

When is the best time to fertilize a lawn in the fall? How much nitrogen needs to be used to get a good result?

—OHIO

For your area, generally the best time to apply turf fertilizer is in early September at the rate of one pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. And again treat in late October or early November at the rate of one to two pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. Some people may prefer to apply only once in the fall. In this situation apply one pound at the end of September or in early October. The first number on the fertilizer bag is nitrogen. This number represents the percentage of actual nitrogen (by weight) in the bag of fertilizer material you have. From this total actual fertilizer material, calculate the 1 to 2 lb. ai (active ingredient) nitrogen needed.

If the application is done correctly, the agronomic benefit will be great. This would include greater and deeper root system development, heat and drought tolerance in the summer and earlier green-up in the spring. Reports also indicate that insect, disease and weed activity may be less severe. In general, it's a good agronomic

practice to implement a fall fertilization program.

Mammal pests

What is the best way to manage skunks and raccoons? These animals are digging the lawns and causing extensive damage. The problem is severe close to the wooded areas.

—NEW YORK

Skunks and raccoon can cause extensive damage to lawns. They dig the lawns in search of underground food such as grubs, earthworms, periodical Cicada nymphs and other soil-inhabiting insects.

Where feasible, try to capture them using traps. Make sure that you have the proper traps designed for their use. Also check with your county or state regulatory agency to see whether it is all right to capture them. After catching, make sure the animals will be relocated or dealt with as per regulatory guidelines. Be careful when moving them from place to place. Some of them may carry contagious diseases.

Also consider using grub control measures to keep the possible food source under control. Make sure that proper insecticide is used at the proper timing. In spite of using insecticide for grub control, sometimes these animals may still visit the lawns in search of other food sources.

Again, in this situation the best option is to use traps. **LM**



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