

ask the expert

BY BALAKRISHNA RAO

Reader identifies mistake

You mentioned using Flagship (an insecticide) for grub control in your column in the March 2000 issue of *Landscape Management*. I thought Flagship was for greenhouse and landscape ornamental plants?

— OHIO

This question is from Dr. Harry Niemczyk from OARDC, OSU and he is right. I am sorry for the misinformation on my part. The correct name I should have mentioned is Meridian for turf use.

Dr. David Cox from the Novartis Corporation, the manufacturer of both Flagship and Meridian, explained the difference. Both products have the same active ingredient and chemistry called thiomethoxam, and they are expecting the EPA registration soon. He mentioned that Meridian insecticide is for turf insect use, and Flagship is for greenhouse and landscape ornamental plants.

Managing grassy weeds

A client of ours has requested that we use Ronstar on a large, several acre property to manage grassy weeds. Recently, we have been using Pre-M. Which one should we use?

— KANSAS

Ronstar is a good herbicide designed to manage annual grassy weeds, such as crabgrass or goosegrass. This preemergent herbicide, formulated as a 2% granular in a biodegradable carrier, is labeled for use on commercial turgrasses, ornamentals and landscape areas.

Reports indicate that Ronstar will have

better results managing goosegrass than crabgrass. Apply Ronstar during late winter or early spring, prior to weed seed germination. Applications made after March or April may not be fully effective.

Studies have also stated that treating half the material in one direction, then treating the other half in the opposite direction may provide better weed control. Read and follow label specifications for best results.

Lilac borers

While pruning some dying branches on an overgrown lilac bush, I found a number of insect larvae. They were about an inch long, white with a brown head. How can I get rid of them?

— PENNSYLVANIA

According to your description, the problem appears to be lilac borer. Infested branches wilt as the larvae tunnel inside and destroy the xylem (sapwood). Eventually, the larvae move to the heartwood. Larvae will be 3/4 to 1 1/2 in. long, with a brown head. The adult is a moth that resembles a wasp.

Feeding damage will weaken the branches and cause breakage. Sometimes, wood-destroying fungi, such as *Polyporus sp.*, will form on the weakened branches.

Lilac borers overwinter in the branches, so you are doing the right thing by selectively pruning and getting rid of the dying or infested branches. To find an infestation, look over the branches for slightly swollen, cracked areas. You may also find holes in the bark and wood.

Treat the lilac with insecticides such as Dursban or Astro. Treatments can start in late April or early June depending on the re-

gion. You may need additional applications.

Borers generally establish on stressed and weakened plants. Therefore, reduce stress and improve plant health. Read and follow label specifications for best results.

Scale insects

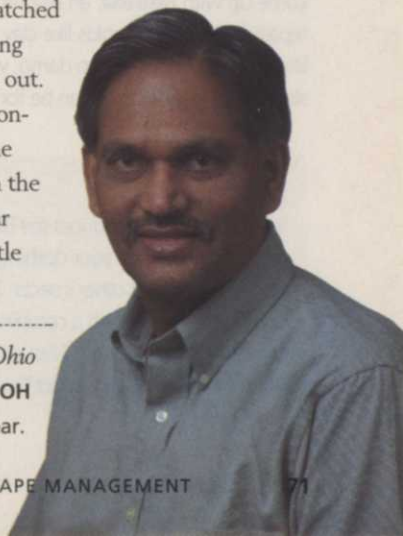
On a client's property, we found brown and white scale-like insects on a pachysandra. What are they?

— OHIO

It appears that the problem is a scale insect. The brown scales are female, and the whitish-colored scales are male. The females are shaped like an oyster shell and are brown. If you turn one over, you may see several eggs underneath. Males are smaller, narrower and white with ridges down the center of their backs. When they are in abundance, the lower side of a leaf may appear a whitish color.

Rake and remove dead and blighted plants to improve air circulation. Apply Horticultural Oil before new growth starts in the spring. Since oil applications do not have a long residual, the oil treatment should be followed by some contact insecticide treatment such as Malathion, Sevin or Talstar.

When applying contact insecticides, make sure that the scale eggs have hatched and the young crawlers are out. For better control, treat the plants when the second instar crawlers settle down.



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SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO: "Ask the Expert" Landscape Management, 7500 Old Oak Blvd.; Cleveland, OH 44130, or email: sgibson@advanstar.com. Please allow two to three months for an answer to appear.