

# ask the expert

BY BALAKRISHNA RAO

## Slug those slugs

**How do you get rid of slugs?**

— OH

Reports indicate that metaldehyde bait can manage slugs. Apply it as bait to the soil. Clear the area around desirable plants of debris, leaves and boards — places where slugs can hide and reproduce. Reports also suggest that shallow dishes filled with stale beer attract slugs. Sink these dishes into the ground so the slugs can crawl into them.

## Ammate for oak wilt?

**One of our employees mentioned that he heard about a product called**

**Ammate to prevent the spread of oak wilt. How and when should we use it?**

— IL

Some professionals are using products such as fuel oil or fuel oil plus ammonium sulfamate (Ammate) to prevent the spread of oak wilt disease fungus (*Ceratocystis fagacearum*). To begin treatment, make axe cuts or a deep girdle in roots to the point of runoff as soon as oak wilt is detected or before half of the tree suffers from the disease. This treatment will kill the infected tree and prevent disease spread. Read and follow label specifications for better results.

## Cooley Spruce Gall Aphid

**We have found a number of slightly swollen growths at the tips of branches on our spruce trees. By matching the photos, we've identified them as Cooley Spruce Gall Aphid. What would be the best way to control them?**

— MI

From your description, your problem ap-

pears to be related to Cooley Spruce Gall Adelgid. Commonly, it is called Cooley Spruce Gall Aphid. One way to control them is to mechanically remove and destroy the galls between May and June. This will kill them before they release the next generation of adelgids. Use proper sanitation methods.

Another way is to use insecticides such as Sevin or Talstar in early spring (before the buds swell) for over-wintering adults. Or, you can apply the insecticides in late fall at the base of the spruce buds and needles for settled adults. Be sure to provide good coverage over branch terminals.

## Weed control primer

**Mulch beds in our shrub planting area have a lot of grassy and broad-leaf weeds, some perennials and some annuals. How can we manage these weeds as well as any future weeds? We considered using Roundup to manage the existing weeds and Surflan to manage future weed problems. Is this a good approach?**

— PA

Yes, your weed management strategy is good. A Roundup Pro application is a good way to manage existing perennial and annual grassy and broadleaf weeds. Another option is to use herbicides such as Finale or Scythe. Scythe offers quick knock-down. However, weeds may resprout from the portion remaining in the ground. Avoid spraying desirable plants with these post-emergent, non-selective herbicides, and don't walk on turfgrass after walking on treated areas. If you do, you will cause damage from "footprint blight." Don't

spray during a windy day and make sure weeds are actively growing. If the weeds are primarily grassy weeds, consider using herbicides such as Vantage or Fusilade for selective management.

As far as pre-emergent management of grassy weeds and a few broadleaf weeds, consider a herbicide such as Surflan, which can be applied to soil surface or over the top of plants. It's stable for 21 days and must be activated with 1/2 in. of water. Shallow cultivation to a depth of 1 to 2 in. will enhance herbicidal effectiveness. Surflan can be tank-mixed with Roundup Pro for post-emergent control and residual pre-emergent control. It can also be mixed with Gallery for pre-emergent control of broadleaf weeds. Gallery is stable for 21 days and must be activated with 1/2 in. of water. Apply it in late summer to early fall and early spring prior to germination of target weeds.

Other preemergent herbicides include Snapshot (combination of Treflan and Gallery), Pre-M, Dacthal, Dimension and Ronstar. These herbicides primarily manage annual grassy weeds but also have some broadleaf weed activity.

There are many other herbicides on the market, which might fit your specific situation. Review the label and see whether a specific herbicide can be used around or over specific ornamental shrubs.



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

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