

Horticulture 2008 Newsletter No. 31 August 6, 2008

VEGETABLES

Tomato Problems



We are still seeing a number of problems on tomatoes. To see a pictorial overview of possible problems, see

<http://www.hfr.ksu.edu/DesktopModules/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentID=2062>

Fall Gardens



This is the time of year we normally think of planting a fall garden. Crops that can be planted now include lettuce, radishes, spinach, and similar crops. There still is time to raise another crop of green beans along with some summer squash (if your summer squash have bitten the dust already). If you can find plants, there still is time to grow cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower.

Planting a fall garden is just like planting a spring garden with some big advantages. You will find the weed pressure to be much less and insect problems may be far fewer than in a spring garden. Seeds will germinate rapidly, so you will have crops up and growing in just a few days – compared to several weeks in the spring.

There are a few drawbacks to fall gardening, and one of those is that you must provide some

regular, frequent watering (possibly daily) until the crops are up and growing. It is best to plant seeds deeper than you do for a spring garden because soil is cooler and moister down a little deeper.

As far as soil preparation is concerned, don't get too excited about deep tillage for a fall garden. Lightly work the soil enough to establish a seedbed; reserve your deep tillage for later in the fall. Also, don't concentrate on adding a lot of organic matter and fertilizer for the fall garden. The organic matter can be added later in the fall with the deeper tillage, and excessive fertilizer application in hot weather is not a good idea. If you have some crop residue to remove from a previous crop, chop the residue with a lawn mower and lightly till the soil surface after the residue has had a chance to dry for 2 to 3 days. (WU)

PESTS

Brown Recluse Spiders



These spiders are reclusive, but they will bite if they are against your skin and movement is restricted. For example, if you put on a shirt with a spider in the sleeve, it will probably feel restricted and bite. Unfortunately, a brown recluse bite may be serious requiring a visit to a doctor..

Brown recluse spiders vary in color with abdomens that may be straw-colored, pinkish-gray, pale to medium brown or slate gray. They have one distinctive characteristic – a dark, violin-shaped pattern on the front of the back. The neck of the violin points toward the rear of the arachnid.

Though structurally tight houses are less likely to have brown recluse populations, any home may be invaded. Houses with a number of unreachable spots may have standing populations that are difficult or impossible to eliminate. In such cases, it is important to reduce numbers and minimize the chances of being bitten.

Two strategies may help. Take advantage of the spiders' daily rhythm. Brown recluse normally hide during the day and don't come out until an hour or two after dark. The search-and-destroy strategy may prove effective if timed to coincide with their activity. Carry a crawling insect spray as you search for the spiders within a foot or two of walls. After destroying any spiders you find, look for a crack they may have been using to hide. Spray the insecticide into that crack and remember to caulk or otherwise seal it. Caulking shut the crack is best, but if caulking will ruin the aesthetics of the room continue to spray into it every 10 days or two weeks. You may want to log the number and date of spider kills to see if you are making progress.

The second strategy involves the use of roach or mouse glue traps. Place these in spots the spiders are likely to be, such as dark areas, around boxes, and close to walls and room corners.

Again, track the catch to see if you are having an effect on numbers.

There are a number of insecticides labeled for spiders but spot treatment with synthetic pyrethroids such as Tempo (cyfluthrin) or Demon (cypermethrin) are especially effective. Cyfluthrin is packaged for homeowners as Bayer Home Pest Control Indoor/Outdoor Insect Killer. Remember, it's best to study the problem and develop a strategy before beginning control measures. For more information refer to publication, MF771, Spiders and Scorpions. You can find it on K-State Research and Extension's Express CD or on the Web at: <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/entml2/mf771.pdf> . (WU)

Fall Webworms? In Mid-Summer?



Unlike most foraging caterpillar species which freely roam and feed, fall webworms cluster within their web home. After foliage within a web mass is consumed, the larvae expand the webbing to include the next immediately available foliage. As larvae approach the end of their feeding cycle, they become very evident due to the absence of foliage, their high numbers and large size. If the webbing in of itself is not considered objectionable, the mass of worms, fecal pellets and shed skins may be repulsive to people.

What are some options to controlling fall webworms? In large/tall trees with canopies out of arm's reach, one can only watch as webworms feed with impunity. In trees with low branches, however, there is some recourse for action. As is always the rule, the sooner a pest population is detected, control procedures are less difficult.

Some people may opt for chemical control. Larvae are always more susceptible to insecticides if treated in their beginning stages. Bear in mind that the larvae are protected against insecticides applied to the outer webbing. Thus it is essential that the sprayer wand be thrust into the web mass so that the spray can be directly applied to the pests.

Another tact may be to treat the foliage. Only the foliage immediately in line to be included into an expanded web need be sprayed.

If people are opposed chemical sprays of any sort, they may decide to physically remove and dispose of those branches with web masses. If many branches contain webs, their removal may result in a tree with a bad haircut. To avoid this, then, do not prune out these branches, but rather remove just the webbing. Webbing can simply be removed by hand.. As the webbing is raked out, the larvae within will be simultaneously collected. And while the now webless, wormless, leafless branch may look stark, all buds are intact and should produce new foliage. (BB)

Plants and Lacebug Damage



We are seeing a number of tree species with browning or bronzing leaves due to lacebug damage. Woody plants that I have seen affected this year include oaks, hawthorns, cotoneaster and sycamore. Lacebugs are very small insects with wings that resemble lace under magnification. All stages of the insect develop on the undersides of the leaves, where they suck the sap. Adults are about 1/8-inch long. Under heavy infestations, stippling damage becomes evident. The leaves lose their green color, becoming pale and the undersides of

the leaves may become speckled with brownish-black excrement spots and cast nymphal skins.

Healthy trees will not be damaged by lacebug this late in the season. The trees had plenty of time during the spring and summer to make the food needed to survive the winter. Control measures are not recommended. (WU)

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