

## Horticulture 2012 Newsletter

No. 14 April 10, 2012

Video of the Week: [Herbs for the Kitchen](#)

### FRUIT

#### Remove Blossoms on Newly Planted Strawberries



Spring-bearing strawberry plants that were set out this spring should have blossoms pinched off. New plants have a limited amount of energy. If blossoms remain on the plants, energy that should go to runner development is used to mature fruit instead. For an adequate strawberry plant population and a good crop next year, early runner development is necessary. Early runners will produce the most strawberries next spring. Newly planted everbearing plants also should have fruits removed for the first 4 to 6 weeks after planting so

they develop a strong root system. (WU)

### FLOWERS

#### Planting Easter Lilies Outside



Gardeners often hate to throw out Easter Lilies after they finish blooming and may wonder if they can grow outside. Though not reliably hardy in Kansas, many gardeners have success if they follow a few simple rules.

1. After the flowers have faded, remove the flower stalk so that energy does not go into making seed.
2. Keep the plant inside until the danger of frost is past. Keep soil moist but never waterlogged. Don't allow water to sit in the tray. Continue to fertilize.

3. The pot can be moved outside when frost is no longer a concern. Sinking the pot into the soil up to the brim and placing in dappled shade will help reduce watering. Continue to water and fertilize until the top growth dies down.
4. Choose a sunny, well-drained spot for planting. Good drainage is vital for lilies and so the addition of organic matter is usually necessary for most soils. Till or dig the soil 6 inches deep and add 3 inches of peat moss. Mix the soil and peat moss together. This will form a berm that should drain very well.
5. Plant the bulbs 6 inches deep and 12 to 18 inches apart and water in well. Mulch to conserve moisture. New growth may appear later in the summer or the plant may stay dormant until the following spring.
6. Cover the plants in the fall after the foliage has died down with straw, pine needles, wood chips or other types of mulch to help protect the plant over winter. Use 4 inches of straw or 3 inches of any of the other materials.
7. Uncover the plants in the spring to allow new growth to appear and fertilize according to soil test. (WU)

## ORNAMENTALS

### Preventing Fruit on Crabapples



Though many gardeners enjoy the brightly colored fruit produced by some crabapple trees, others find the fruit messy and would like to prevent them from forming. Fortunately, there is an easy way to accomplish this.

Sevin (carbaryl) is an insecticide that not only controls insects but can cause apples and crabapples to drop while still small. Check the label for this use. Not all Sevin labels mention thinning on the label.

Sevin should be applied soon after the blossoms have dried on the trees. **DO NOT** apply Sevin during bloom because it is extremely toxic to bees. Spray the trees thoroughly with 2 tablespoons of liquid Sevin per gallon of water. Stems on the fruit should turn yellow and wrinkle, and the tiny apples should start to drop in 7 to 10 days. If drop hasn't started in two weeks, a second application may be needed. Sevin remains effective for about 35 days after full bloom though the fruit will become more difficult to remove as it increases in size. Note that Sevin is specific for apples and crabapples and will not prevent fruit formation on other trees. (WU)

# PESTS

## Borers on Pines?



If you see a row of holes on pine trees, the problem is not borers. Borer holes will be randomly spaced over the trunk. Holes that are in a horizontal (most common) or vertical row are caused by the feeding of the yellow-bellied sapsucker. This woodpecker makes shallow holes and then feeds on the sap released from the wounds or on insects attracted to the site. Holes may vary in size as illustrated by the two photos above.

Other trees this bird often attacks include apples, maples, and Bradford pear, but about any tree species is a potential target. Surprisingly, certain trees may become favorites to the exclusion of nearby trees of the same species. Damage to mature, established trees is usually slight and temporary though small trees may be girdled and killed.

These birds are migratory and are usually present from October to April. Therefore, they should not cause any more damage until next fall. If you feel that damage is severe enough to warrant control, you may want to try one of the following remedies next October.

- Wrap the trunk with fine wire mesh in the area of damage. This may discourage them if left in place for several months. The mesh **MUST** be adjusted every six months or removed when no longer needed. If the mesh is left in place, the tree will likely be girdled. The mesh may potentially be more deadly than the sapsucker.

- Use Tanglefoot on the area of damage. This is a sticky material that is applied to tree trunks to capture insects that crawl up the trunk. Yellow-bellied sapsuckers do not like to put their feet in the sticky material. This material may lose stickiness due to dust or other materials and require additional applications. (WU)

## Look Now for Pine Sawfly



Pine sawflies are feeding now. If you have had a problem with this insect before, check your pines for the beginning stages of damage. When these worms are small, they cannot consume a complete needle, so they rasp off the top layer of cells. This leaves individual needles brown and twisted. Look for this damage to pinpoint where sawfly larvae are feeding. The larvae are gregarious, so a number of larvae will be found close together. As the larvae mature, they will consume whole needles and can virtually strip a tree. This happens before new

needles expand, so the tree is rarely killed. The pine sawfly prefers Scotch and Mugo pines. A number of insecticides can be used for control including Orthene, cyfluthrin (Bayer Lawn and Garden Multi-Insect Killer), malathion, esfenvalerate (Ortho Bug-B-Gon Multipurpose Insect Killer and Monterey Bug Buster) and Sevin. Horticultural oils and Insecticidal Soaps are also effective because of the soft skin of sawfly larvae. (WU)

## Mole Control



Though moles spend most of their time underground, the damage they cause above ground is all too visible. Meandering paths of upheaved soil are evidence of the small mammals foraging for food. Some tunnels may be abandoned soon after being built while others are travel lanes and used for a longer period of time. Even though moles do not feed on plant matter, they can still cause damage by disturbing roots and uprooting small plants.

Numerous home remedies have been concocted to control moles including chewing gum, noisemakers, broken glass, bleaches, windmills, and human hair. None have been found to provide consistent and reliable control. Poison baits also fail to work because moles feed on earthworms and grubs, not vegetable matter. Even grub control products are ineffective as they do not control earthworms, and earthworms are the primary food source for moles.

The best control method is the use of traps. There are three types of traps (harpoon, choker, and scissor-jawed) and each can be effective but may take some time to master. Try the following suggestions.

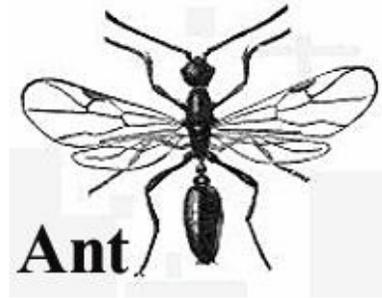
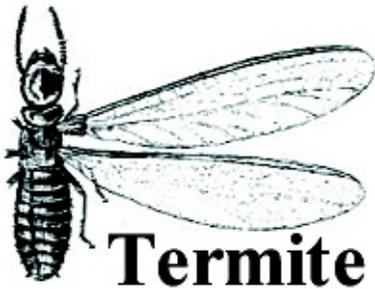
Moles use some tunnels more than others. Use a broomstick or something similar to poke holes in a number of runs. Check a day later to see which runs have been “repaired.” These are the active runs and should be used for trap placement.

Place a trap in an active run by excavating soil, placing the trap and then replacing loose soil.

Secure the trap so that the recoil will not lift the trap out of the ground. Make sure the triggering mechanism is in the center of the run.

Finally, push down two more holes, one on each side of the trap. Moles should be caught when they try to repair the tunnel. Move traps if no moles are caught within three days. (WU)

### Termites or Ants



Both termites and ants are able to swarm and may have wings during part of their lives. Since these insects are close to the same size, people often misidentify flying ants as termites. Since flying ants do not attack wooden structures like termites, it is helpful to be able to tell the difference.

Fortunately, there are several differences that can easily distinguish the two. For example, ants have a thin waist; the waist of a termite is thick. Also, ants' antennae are elbowed, while termites' are straight. Thirdly, termites have two pairs of wings that are of equal length. Ants also have two pairs of wings, but theirs are of unequal length. Homeowners who find signs of termite activity should shop for a reputable pest control firm. (WU)

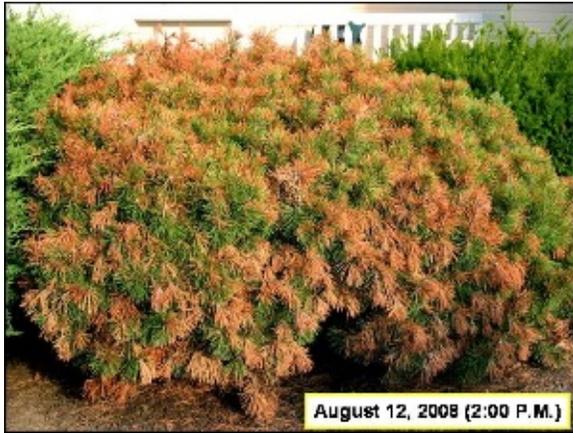
### Asparagus Beetles



Both the adult and larvae of asparagus beetles feed on asparagus spears by chewing the tips and spear surfaces, leading to scarring and staining of the spear tips. Asparagus beetles overwinter as adults in trash near the garden. The adults are a blue/black beetle with a red prothorax with yellow spots. The larvae are a soft, greenish grub. Small, elongated, black eggs — sticking out long ways from the side of asparagus spears — are laid on developing spears.

Early control of beetles is important to reduce feeding damage later. Sevin will provide control (a one-day wait before harvest is required). Some products with permethrin are also labeled but require a 3 day waiting period between spraying and harvest. (WU)

### Pine Tip Moth Control



Willy Goevert of 4-C Christmas Tree Farm on the southeast edge of Wichita has about 20 years of experience of monitoring for Pine Tip Moth with pheromone traps. He reports peak flight in this region for the first generation in 2012 was on April 4. Best control for the first generation is 10 days after peak flight. Thus, he and other Christmas tree growers will be spraying toward the end of next week – probably 13th/14th. 4-C Christmas Tree Farms has had much better control by spraying according to monitoring vs. calendar date.

Those that spray for tip moth in mugho pine, ponderosa pine, and Virginia pine will see increased effectiveness by spraying close to this date. (BN)

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Controlling Grassy Weeds in Broadleaf Plants



Most gardeners are familiar with herbicides that can be used to eliminate broadleaves (i.e., dandelions) from grasses (i.e., lawn). They may not be as familiar with herbicides that can take grasses out of broadleaf plants like shrubs. There are two major weed killer types that are used to kill grassy weeds in broadleaf plants. On the commercial side, the trade names for these products are Fusilade and Poast. Homeowner labeling is more diverse. I have seen Fusilade sold under the names of "Grass-B-Gon," and "Grass-No-More Over the Top Spray"

and "Over the Top Grass Killer." Poast is sometimes sold to homeowners under the Poast label but I've seen it more commonly sold as "Hi-Yield Grass Killer" and "Monterey Grass Getter." There may be other trade names, too. Fortunately, you can identify the product by the common chemical name listed on the label. Fusilade's common chemical name is fluazifop, and Poast's is sethoxydim.

If you decide to use one of these products, read the label carefully. Often, a crop oil must be added to the spray solution for the herbicide to work well. Some grassy weeds are harder to control such as bromegrass and sandbur.

Though both of these products can be used over the top of numerous broadleaf plants (including iris), there are some differences in labeling. For example, if you need to control grasses in strawberries, choose Poast because it has a seven-day waiting period before harvest. Fusilade cannot be used within one year of harvest. (WU)

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