

From The Roots Up

The Shrub and Tree Newsletter of Prestige Shrub and Tree, Ltd. ®
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This Issue:

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This is your fourth shrub and tree care visit for the year.

We saw a lot of plants, as late as April, with freeze damage still exhibiting on some plants. Trees such as maple showed a black necrosis in the leaves that appeared to be fungal in nature, but in actuality, was simply old freeze damage to the bud that occurred before leaf expansion.

Soft tissues in plants such as hosta and fern also showed freeze damage in the form of dead tips and holes in the hosta leaves long after the actual freeze occurred.

Our soil temperatures were very slow to warm up this year which further delayed growth of some plants and definitely delayed recovery. It appears now most of our landscapes have recovered. Be sure to go ahead with the pruning of any dead wood to aid in filling holes in affected plants.

June arrived with temperatures in the upper eighties and lower nineties, which is normal, and as the temperatures get hotter the plants are demanding more water.

Though we have been receiving rain, the coverage has been very scattered and the interval between rain events has been long. Consequently, the soil dries very quickly between the rainfall event so supplemental irrigation is needed.

Now that you are allowed to water again, don't drown your landscape. **One deep root**

watering per week is generally all that is needed to keep your landscape healthy and vigorous. Over watering causes numerous problems in the landscape such as rotted roots, poor growth and increased pest problems.

Today we will be applying a fungicide, miticide, and insecticide, as needed, to control the pests found and to prevent other pests from moving in on the plants.

Various Leaf and Stem Galls And Scales Are Prolific This Year

We have been seeing large populations of scales of all types. These populations are probably the result of great growing conditions last year with all the rainfall. Along with the scale insects we are seeing a lot of different pests and non-pests infecting leaves and stems of many different plants.

One of the more interesting pests we saw in abundance this year was the oak jumping gall. This gall is caused by a small wasp that lays eggs in the leaf and the leaf responds by growing around the larval wasp and forming a tiny woody gall. When these galls fall off or you scrape them off onto a paper they jump around a couple times due to the movement of the tiny wasp larvae inside.

The galls do not do permanent damage to the tree but you may

see a lot of defoliation before the tree begins to regrow leaves. As with all these galls, some caused by wasps, some by aphids, some by psyllids (aphid like insects) and some fungal, there is no preventative treatment and no effective treatment for the insect once the leaf is infected. We expect to see many more of these various galls show up on trees and shrubs as the summer progresses.

Summer Pests

Japanese beetle emergence has been non-existent the first part of June, which was surprising due to the level of rain we have been experiencing. If the normal rainfall levels continue, the grub populations may recover and we may see more beetles in subsequent years. As usual, the beetles will remain with us until the end of July. We do expect the beetles to arrive eventually and, as a reminder, there is no complete control for the pests. Even when the plants are treated you will see some level of damage due to the fact that the beetle must eat some foliage for the insecticide to work.

If you happen to see a large red mite, not to worry. These are clover mites that feed on clovers and grasses and are not an ornamental pest. They can be quite a temporary nuisance showing up in large numbers. The best bet is to wash them away when outside the house and

vacuum up those that come inside.

As always **plant hopper** activity (the white, cottony fuzzy stuff on the stems) is increasing as we move into midsummer. This pest does little damage to the plant. A simple blast of water from the hose usually keeps this guy in check.

Orange stripe oak worm, lace bug and the **crepe myrtle aphid** will also increase in activity. **Powdery mildew** is moderate so far this year; the best remedy for this disease is an environmentally safe application of water sprayed on the leaves. As always we will treat for pests, as needed, when we are on your property.

Moles, Voles, Chipmunks, Rabbits and Deer Are Here to Stay!

This problem is obviously not going away for a while. I have been on a mission to rid my landscape of chipmunks for several years now and have been very successful but one moments lack of vigilance and you rapidly lose your advantage! We'll cover some of our problem critters and methods for control.

Moles and voles are different animals. The **mole** is a small rodent which burrows under the ground and eats earthworms and grubs. The fact that you have mole activity does not necessarily mean that you have a grub problem. The best bet at this time for control is to use one of the new mole baits that contain Warfarin. Talprid or Tomcat, Kaput and Adios are Warfarin type baits that seem to work very effectively. Don't expect fast results.

The **vole** is also a small rodent which burrows underground but is a vegetarian, eating the roots of your best plants. If you really want to know your vole, head to the following web site from NC State. This web site probably has more information than you really wanted to know but really is a great reference.

www.ces.ncsu.edu/nreos/wild/wildlife/wdc/voles2.html

Currently your best two methods for vole control is either traps (mouse snap traps) or rat killer pellets. Just follow the directions on the bait. The snap traps should be baited with apple and placed near a suspected vole hole near the base of the plant being eaten.

Be sure that you keep mulch away from the base of plants as the voles use this for cover while feeding.

Now let's talk about a probably non politically correct subject, chipmunk control. The best method for chipmunk control is trapping with a live trap. Buy one with at least a 5" x 5" opening, preferably with a trap door on the back also. The trap door on the back allows for extermination if that is what you wish. If you simply want to relocate them, take them at least 5 miles away. (Those folks that live where you dump them will really appreciate your gift. Be prepared to run!)

Though you can use bait in the trap we find that the chipmunks can't resist walking into an empty trap placed in their runways if the trap is the correct size. In general your cats and dogs can possibly keep the chipmunks and other rodents at bay unless you have had a population explosion. Then

your pets simply won't keep ahead of the new generations.

Rabbits can be a major browsing nuisance on your flowers and ground covers and populations have been growing recently. Control methods are similar to deer control methods (see below). Rabbits usually feed at night so all you find is the result of their feeding activity. If you notice just the tops of low growing flowers or ground covers being bitten off you probably have rabbit activity.

Deer, of course, are the biggest nuisance. When we have high rainfall years yielding plentiful food stores, the deer become less stressed and populations can increase, so we get even more deer! Urban deer populations are very large and growing.

Once the deer browse the plants, especially during the late summer and fall, the plants won't recover until the following spring. In some cases the plants won't recover at all due to the fact that too much of the plant was removed too late in the season.

Deer repellents such as Deer Away and Deer Off are fairly effective but must be reapplied after rain. Deer netting is also effective but the plant must be covered completely.

We are always asked where to purchase these pest control related products so we put together a page at our Prestige website. Visit our web site at www.prestigestt.com and click on Prestige Recommends to see where to buy.