

IN THE DIRT

Fall invaders are pests such as spiders, boxelder bugs, clover mites, wood roaches, and lady beetles that accidentally move indoors as they seek overwintering locations. Most are a nuisance. For crawling pests, a perimeter insecticide spray will help control them. For flying insects, use a silicone caulk to close openings.

Tattered, Discolored Tree Leaves – Ignore Them!

During late summer and autumn, Extension offices often receive calls about- or have samples brought in- of deciduous tree and shrub leaves that appear chewed or discolored.

Along with asking what is causing the damage, we are often asked if a pesticide application is needed. The answer is usually no to applying pesticides this late in the season, after early August, for minor pests and many major pests.

When I visit with clientele, I remind them that if we stood outside all summer we would look a little chewed up, tattered and discolored too.

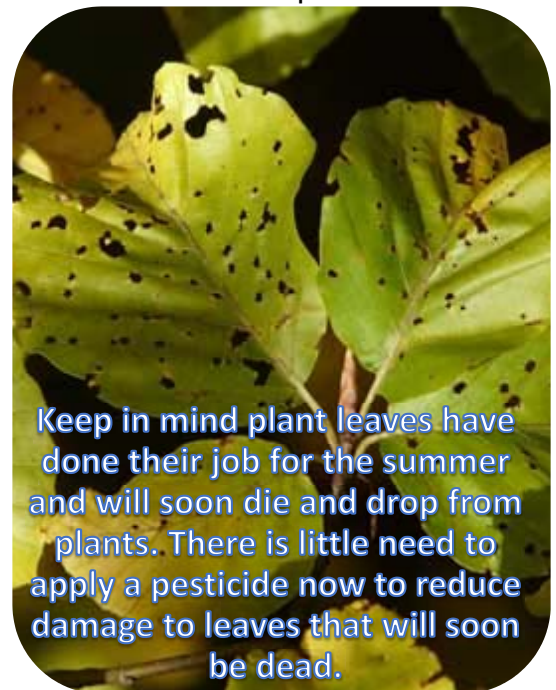
Use Pesticides Responsibly

Pesticides such as insect killers (insecticides), disease preventers (fungicides) or weed killers (herbicides) are chemicals that need to be used responsibly. Insecticides kill many non-target insects like pollinators and other beneficial insects. Herbicides can drift and damage ornamental or edible plants.

By over applying or using pesticides when they are not justified, or at a time when they are not effective, pests can develop resistance to the chemical. And it is harmful pests that seem to build resistance more so than beneficial insects.

One factor leading to a decline in honeybees is the irresponsible use of pesticides. Insecticides can kill or weaken honeybees and increase their susceptibility to predators, diseases and environmental stresses. Pesticides are an important tool in pest management. But they should only be applied after the following steps are taken. The cause of the damage is positively identified as a pest rather mechanical or environmental injury. The identified pest can cause economic damage or damage that leads to plant death, not minor injury that only detracts from a plants appearance.

If it is determined the pest is one where control is justified, first consider all control options. If pesticides are a good option, determine when during the season or during a pests life cycle a pesticide is best applied to be effective. By the time plant damage is noticed, it is often too late for a pesticide application.



Keep in mind plant leaves have done their job for the summer and will soon die and drop from plants. There is little need to apply a pesticide now to reduce damage to leaves that will soon be dead.

But Why Are Tattered Tree Leaves Not A Problem?

And now back to tree and shrub leaves appearing chewed, tattered or discolored at this time of year. Keep in mind plant leaves have done their job for the summer and will soon die and drop from plants. There is little need to apply a pesticide now to reduce damage to leaves that will soon be dead. This is not a responsible use of a pesticide.

It is sometimes believed that if a pest is killed now then the problem will not reoccur next season, but this is rarely true. Pesticides applied now may reduce a few overwintering pests, but are very unlikely to prevent or control damage next season.

Fall sanitation, such as cleaning up and destroying fallen leaves and fruit, is much more helpful in reducing overwintering pests at this point in the season.

Also, while leaves may be tattered or chewed, as long as the leaf remains mostly green then photosynthesis is still occurring. A few holes or tears in leaves now or even earlier in the season will not interfere with production of carbohydrates and sugars (plant food).

Source: Kelly Feehan, Nebraska Extension Horticulture Educator

Fall Lawn and Landscape Chores

Fall will be here before we know it. Take the time to read this to help you through all of your horticulture and insect issues during the fall months.



Control of perennial weeds, like dandelions, is most effective in fall.

Lawn Care

September is a good month for overseeding, fertilizing, and aerating your lawn. If you have bare or thin spots, overseed before September 15th to make sure the seedlings are well establishment before winter, Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue are the best choices for seed in Nebraska. Remember to fertilize with the holidays - Labor Day and Halloween are coming up for our final two applications for this year.

If your lawn has a deep thatch layer, over 1/2 inch, consider aerating your lawn. Fall is a good time for aeration as well.

Fall Weed Control

Weed control is better in the fall. This year has been a great growing season for many of our lawn weeds, especially clover. Perennial weeds such as dandelions, creeping Charlie or ground ivy, and clover, are best controlled in the fall with either 2,4-D or triclopyr products. Remember to apply these chemicals on days when the temperatures are predicted to be at or below 80 degrees for 72 hours. This is the time of the year when these weeds are taking their nutrients back into their roots for next season's growth, so the herbicide moves more readily into the roots too, resulting in a better kill.

The winter annuals such as henbit are just beginning their growth in the fall so it is best to treat them now rather than in the spring when they are almost done with their growing season.

Fall Clean Up of Landscape Beds

It is finally getting close to the time of the year when we can begin cutting back our perennial plants. Once these plants die back in the fall, when their leaves turn brown, we can cut them back for the year.

Peonies and Iris are two plants that should be cut back in the fall to avoid diseases spreading from this season to next since these plants tend to get leaf spot diseases annually. When you go to

remove the spent leaves, you can also divide these plants and transplant them if you need them in a different location.

Avoid pruning roses and butterfly bushes until the early spring to avoid problems with moisture getting into the hollow stems of these plants.

If you have a shrub that blooms early in the spring, such as lilac, forsythia, weigela, some spireas, and some hydrangeas, wait to cut those back until after bloom next spring to avoid removing flower buds that are already on the shrub for next year.



Prevent home invaders, like this wolf spider, from coming indoors in fall.

Prevent Insect Invaders

Watch for fall invading insects in your home in the fall. This is the time of year when many insects will begin to invade our homes. As it begins to get cooler outside, insects move into our homes to stay warm. Many of the insects we see in the fall inside our homes include boxelder bugs, Asian multicolored ladybeetles, stinkbugs, spiders, millipedes, centipedes, and ants. These insects are mostly just a nuisance to us when they come into our homes.

The best control for these would be to seal up all cracks where they can enter our homes and to use the insect barrier sprays around the home, especially around doors and windows.

Source: Nicole Stoner, Nebraska Extension Horticulture Educator

Dermeestid Beetles

These common insects scavenge and feed on animal matter like dried meats, dead insects, hides and woolens. The species that feed on wool and other natural fibers or blends are sometimes called carpet beetles. Closely related species, such as the warehouse beetle, varied carpet beetle and larder beetle, have expanded their diet and also feed on grain and grain-based products. They are especially common in flour and cereals, but also are found in candy, cocoa, cookies, corn meal, nuts, pasta, dried spices and many other dry foods.



Larder Beetle Adult (Dermeestid)

The adult beetles are small, oval and variously colored. The full grown larvae are similar in size to the adults for each species and tend to be cigar-shaped and banded with dark, long hairs. In some species, the larvae have a tuft of hair at the tail-end of the body.



Cast (shed) skins from dermeestid beetle larvae

Typically, only larvae will be seen in infested food because the adults feed on pollen and leave the food once they have emerged from their pupal stage. Sometimes only the larval "skins" will be found. Dead adults are often found in window sills because they fly to the light, trying to get outside.

Because some of these species feed on woolens, infestations in the pantry may spread and damage valuable clothing, woolens and furs. Proper cleaning and storage of natural fabrics will help prevent damage.

Source: <http://lancaster.unl.edu/pest/resources/pantrypests304.shtml>