

THE JUNE LANDSCAPE GARDENER

BY

MARK D. UHL , HORTICULTURIST

This Spring we have seen more than enough rainfall. When combined with cool temperatures fungus problems (Red thread) on turf have shown up on many of our lawns. This will produce small dead spots of turf but will usually go away on its own as the weather moves into the dry and warm period of Summer .

Grasses are currently flowering and thinning out so by June 5-10th your mowing schedule which is currently once every 6-8 days can be stretched to 10- 14 days. (Assuming we get our normal warm-up for this time of year.) Mowing height for bluegrass and turf type tall fescue lawns should be adjusted to 3-3.5 inches and remain at that height for the remainder of the summer. This will provide shading of the soil allowing the root systems of the grass plants to stay cooler, thus alive.

Broadleaf weed control of dandelions, clover, etc. , should be done when temperatures are below 80 degrees, and no rain is expected for 48 hours. The application should be spaced equally between mowings to allow for growth of the weeds before the application and kill time prior to mowing off treated foliage, after the application. These conditions do not show up very often after the middle of June, so when they do you need to take advantage of them. Active growth of the weeds at the time of application is necessary for a good kill. Another thought- you need to make broadleaf applications 4 weeks prior to or after late summer seeding, (last date approx. August 10th for seeding dates in Late September.).

I am seeing nutsedge starting out - sedges have leaf blades with a strong rib on the back making them appear triangular in shape, with rains they will flourish. The first place they show up are in our drainage swales. Professionals have a herbicide called Manage which targets nutsedge. Some of the broadleaf weed killers list nutsedge as a weed they control, so read the label prior to purchasing to be sure you will get good control.

June is a great month for pruning. Spring growth flushes have finished and the new growth generated at the point where the pruning cuts are made will have time to mature and harden off prior to winter. Prune undesirable branches to a point inside of the main body of the plant using a sharp pair of shears and cutting just above a side branch that is pointing in the direction you want the plant to grow. Any time, through the second week of July is still O.K. Pruning after that time should be limited to emergencies or very minor touch ups. October will again be safe for pruning of non-early-Spring flowering plants. When pruning with a pair of by pass pruner's keep the blade side next to the "to be retained" part of the plant. This way the cut end is not crushed by the hook part of the pruning shear.

Start looking for lacebug on azaleas (underside of leaves a small clear winged moth 1/8th inch long). These are responsible for the mottled and whitened foliage on azaleas. They feed on the undersides of, first the older, then the younger leaves. Once spotted, control can be obtained using Orthene for a quick knock down or one of the Merit products for a longer period of control (more expensive), follow label directions for best

results. If you catch this early and control the first generation the second and third generations will not be a problem.

Spider mites can cause foliage to appear yellow and can gradually cause the death of branches. If you have noticed a general decline of the plants in an area over a period of months to years and don't seem to see any insects, these may be the culprits. An oil spray can suffocate the spider mites without causing severe damage to the predator insects. The Merit formulated products (see above recommendation) or similar products in the neonicotinoid class of pesticides have been known to cause problems for parasitoid mites. Using a Merit product may cause an unintended side effect of a pest mite explosion. Keep an eye out for this possibility.

Japanese beetle grubs are large now and will generate this years adult beetles in July. These adults will lay eggs to produce a new crop of grubs. Products containing Merit can be applied to lawns with past histories of grub problems during June and July to control the small grubs that will emerge to feed on grass roots in August and September. Merit takes about two months to activate in the soil and is most effective against the small, recently hatched grubs. Merit is also a great product to use to control Hemlock Woolly Adelgid on hemlock trees. "These look like little cotton balls stuck in the leaf axils, usually on the lower branches. A soil application at the base of the tree can provide up to three years protection for moderate sized trees.

Many scale insect populations have their crawler stages during June when young hatch and spread. Control these with horticultural oils and soaps. The oils and to a degree the soaps act to suffocate the crawlers. Once the crawlers settle and produce the waxy coating, the oils are the way to control adult scale. Shearing of plants, which results in a thick outer coating of new growth and no foliage inside of that thick layer, produces the perfect place for scale insects to grow and reproduce. They are protected from predators and sprays alike by the thick outside layer of foliage. Open up your plants with proper pruning to allow for natural and chemical controls to go to work on scale populations.

*** Information given here is to be used at your own risk. Always read the label of pesticides and follow label directions. Label directions supersede information given here as to suitability of intended use.