

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™

Florida-Friendly Roadmap



Delay Before You Spray

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Responsible pest management begins with regular inspections or ‘scouting’ for insect infestations or other pathogens damaging your landscape plants. Just because you see a bug on your plants does not mean that it is a damaging insect. Identification of the insect or disease is the first step.

IPM, Integrated Pest Management is a series of steps taken to manage damaging pest populations. Identifying the pest, utilizing the least harmful methods of control and finally with all first and second stage options exhausted, the use of more toxic controls may be applied using the labeled instructions on the package.

Many insect infestations can be seasonally anticipated or expected. Sod webworm in early September would be an example. Insect infestations may also target specific plant species. Examples like chinch bug infestation on St Augustine grasses, oleander caterpillar or



Oleander Caterpillar

scale on King Sago plants can easily be found during regular inspections, can be anticipated and may be controlled before the pest population

expands. Many plant species or cultivars are developed to resist many pest or disease problems.

Selection of resistant plants would be a good initial step to reduce the need for toxic controls. Planting plants in appropriate conditions, (the right plant in the right place), regular scouting for problems and providing moisture to the soil rather than irrigating the foliage are also first step ways to avoid or limit pest problems.

After identifying the pest causing damage to the plant, continue your inspection. Many times beneficial insects

are also in the neighborhood. Insects such as lady beetles, big eyed bugs and others may be eradicating the damaging insects naturally, but will also be eliminated by application of harmful



Beneficial insect: Big-eyed bug

products. One percent of insects account for the damaging activity on plants leaving 99%, which are not damaging to plants and many being predatory or parasitic to the damaging insect population. Don't kill the help.

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(continued from page 4) PEST MANAGEMENT

Once the pest is identified and is causing significant damage a control strategy is advised.

Mechanical removal is a primary least harmful method. Pruning shears are a great way to eliminate a damaging insect population quickly. Determine if the insect is one that is mobile. Is it a winged insect or a sedentary insect like mealybugs or scale? Life cycles and insect habits may offer additional strategies to successfully control the insect.

For example: Scale insects protect themselves with hard outer shells and may be difficult to control as adults. Immature stages of this insect are identified as 'crawlers' and move about during this immature

pesticide application should also avoid daytime insecticide application to flowering plants reducing potential harm to valuable pollinating insects.

Many pesticides are targeted toward an insect or fungus type and may be harmful to the host plant you are trying to protect or ineffective against the infestation you are trying to control. Read labels thoroughly to prevent ineffective control, pollution of water bodies or damage to the host plant. Let's also not forget personal protective equipment to reduce your exposure to the chemicals when mixing or applying them as indicated on the label safety requirements.

**THINK
SAFETY
FIRST**

**WEAR
PERSONAL
PROTECTIVE
EQUIPMENT**

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Extermination is not the term used today describing pest control strategies and in the past the extermination strategy led to over application of dangerous products not always targeting the damaging pest. IPM is a management plan developed to reduce damaging pest populations employing pest identification, appropriate cultural control practices and finally utilizing a targeted control method reducing insect infestations or disease pathogens damaging landscape plants.



Hemispherical scale (*Saissetia coffeae*).

Credits: R.J. Gill, CDFA

stage and can easily be controlled using least harmful soapy methods. Make sure if a toxic control method is necessary that the product used is labeled for control of the identified damaging insect or disease. Systemic pesticides also migrate into the plant and may kill beneficial insect or pollinator populations not damaging your plant. Harmful