



Pest Corner

May, 2007

Adapted from information found in articles by Don Tapio, GH County Extension Agent. Also from **Common Sense Pest Control**, by Olkowski, Daar, Olkowski, and WSU Extension Publications (see below).

Moles

Insect eaters that "swim" through the soil looking for prey. Their large, outward pointed claws are well suited for life in the narrow tunnels they dig. They may dislodge roots and damage some plants. However, they are blamed for damage they might not have caused. They are delicate creatures that improve the soil texture, while eating many pest insects. Grass damaged by moles often recovers quickly. Moles rarely stay in lawns for very extended periods of time unless cultural practices have encouraged high insect populations. Moles eat large amounts of white grubs that damage lawns. Since their diet is mainly non-plant material, they also may eat earthworms, spiders, and centipedes.

People dislike the sight of mole hills in their lawns because of aesthetics, or the slight obstacle to the mower. The mole runways may be used by other pests such voles, white-footed mouse, and the common house mouse that eat seeds, bulbs, and roots causing direct damage to the garden. The best direct action is to press the mole hill down and water the area thoroughly. Mole activity may last only a week or two in a particular area; after that they move on. This "here today, gone tomorrow" behavior is probably at the root of misconceptions that make mole home remedies and pesticides appear credible.

It is important, however, to decide whether there are gophers in the garden instead of moles. Gophers are rodents that might be causing the plant damage observed.

Least Toxic Mole Control: They are primarily beneficial, eating insects and aerating the soil. Attempt to reduce the white grub soil population. Create stony, soil barriers, where desired, around certain plants; use solid fencing or barriers around small areas. Flush moles out of their tunnels with the garden hose. Of course, there is also the option of just ignoring them and enjoy other garden events.

Photinia Hedges

The new foliage maturing into striking red color often gets covered with brown spots. After, many of the leaves fall off. Photinia is susceptible to Entomosporium leaf spot. This fungus is characterized by circular dark-red to dark-brown or black spots. The small, black blister-like dots in the center are the fruiting bodies or spore structures of the fungus. The centers of the spots turn gray because the spores have oozed out of the fruiting bodies. Severe infections result in leaf drop and weakening of the plant. Moist and cool weather is ideal for disease development. Brilliant sunshine kills the spores when the weather is dry.

Providing good air circulation around plants and raking up fallen, infected leaves helps reduce the potential for disease. Applications of the fungicide Daconil Weather Stik or Funginex, used per labeled directions, may prevent the infection. However, these infections are recurrent. In addition, Photinia is susceptible to a physiological reddish purple, round spots on the leaves-- usually during the winter season. The cause of this leaf spot is **not** known. Plant pathologists indicate that it is not caused by a fungus or a bacterium. It is suspected that the spots are the physiological result of stress. Good cultural care for the plants may help minimize the problem.

Plants to Nourish Beneficial Insects

See WSU publication PNW0550, Encouraging Beneficial Insects in Your Garden by Gail Gredler. Also see MISC0201, PNW Integrated Pest Management Manual by Bobbitt, Antonelli, Foss, Davidson, Byther, Maleike.

Plant list includes: Achillea filipendulina (Lacewings, aphidius, ladybugs); Alyssum (Hoverflies); Amaranthus (Ground beetles); Peonies, Firethorn, Forsythia (for Spring Tiphia wasps); Anethum graveolens/Dill (for Ichneumon wasp, ladybugs, lacewings); Angelica gigas (Lacewings); Convolvulus minor (Ladybugs, hoverflies); Cosmos bipinnatus (Hoverflies, parasitic wasps, lacewings); Digitalis (Dicyphus); Daucus carota/Queen Anne's lace (for lacewings, ladybugs, hoverflies); Foeniculum vulgare/Fennel (Damsel bugs, ladybugs, lacewings); Helianthus annulus (Pirate bugs, beneficial mites); Iberis umbellata (Hoverflies); Limonium latifolium/Statice (Hoverflies, parasitic wasps); Lupine (Aphidius, aphidoletes, hoverflies); Melissa officinalis/Lemon balm (Parasitic wasps, tachinid flies); Petroselinum crispum/Parsley (Parasitic wasps, hoverflies, tachinid flies); Shasta daisy (Pirate bugs, beneficial mites); Sunflowers (Pirate bugs, aphidius); Verbascum thaspus (Dicyphus).

Cecilia's Side Tip

Who is Dicyphus? Dicyphus is a true bug that preys on all stages of greenhouse whitefly (*Trialeurodes vaporariorum*), tobacco whitefly (*Bemisia tabaci*) and silverleaf whitefly (*Bemisia argentifolii*),) preferring eggs and larvae. Being a general predator or opportunist, it also feeds on aphids, and to a lesser extent, two-spotted spider mites, insect eggs, leaf-miner larvae and thrips. However, populations develop most rapidly on whiteflies.