



10-Minute University™

Oregon Master Gardener™ Association – Clackamas County Chapter
In Cooperation with Oregon State University Extension Service



Fall & Winter Pests and Diseases

Stink Bugs and Box Elder Bugs (Insects)

Problem: Insects congregate on walls and windows causing a nuisance.

Cause: These bugs seek warmth when air temperature drops.

Solution: Prevent entry by repairing screens and caulking around windows, doors, screen soffits, corner trim and attic vents. Remove bugs with a vacuum or by hand. Stink bugs omit an odor; drop them into soapy water to avoid exposure.

Fall Webworm (Insect)

Problem: Large silken tents in various deciduous trees, filled with caterpillars, frass (poop), and dead leaves. Sometimes tents engulf one or more branches. Usually aesthetic damage only.

Cause: Caterpillars of a native species of Tiger Moth enclose themselves under a silken tent and eat leaves within the tent.

Solution: Look for tents in late summer and control before significant damage is done. Prune off infested branches but avoid spreading caterpillars. Destroy by submersing in soapy water.

Crane Fly (Insect)

Problem: Affected turf areas thin out severely in early spring when vigorous growth should begin.

Cause: European crane fly larvae hatch in late summer and feed on the roots of turf grass December to May.

Solution: Turning off irrigation systems shortly after Labor Day will often create enough drought stress to reduce larval populations without causing damage to turf. Begin monitoring for thin patches of turf grass in December. Administer proper lawn care (consult 10-Minute U handout on Lawn Care) to keep it healthy. In addition, practice sustainable gardening to enlist the help of natural enemies such as birds, beetles, bats, yellow jackets, frogs and nematodes.

Pantry Pests (Insects)

Problem: Insects found inside dry goods such as cereal, flour, dried fruits, pet food, bird seed.

Cause: Small moths and beetles are the most common insects infesting food in the home.

Solutions: Inspect all food containers and discard those found to be infested. Thoroughly clean shelves and storage bins. Store food in solid containers with tight lids. Stopping the infestation takes continuous, persistent effort of monitoring, removing, and cleaning.

Powdery Mildew (Fungus)

Problem: Leaves and stems show tiny white spots that turn powdery white and expand to cover all portions of plant. Affects many species of plants.

Cause: Common in late summer when air temperature is between 68-81°F. Spores can be brought in by wind. High humidity, warm temperatures, and dense plantings all promote fungal growth.

Solution: Plant resistant cultivars if available. Plant in full sun, avoid dense plantings, and, where possible, practice crop rotation. Prune off diseased foliage to slow spread of infection in early stages.

Red Thread (Fungus)

Problem: Circular, irregular yellow patches become brown & dead looking. Affected grass blades have a faintly pinkish color.

Cause: A fungus commonly seen in Oregon, often observed in fall during periods of humid weather. Although it causes a cosmetic problem for the lawn, it rarely kills grass.

Solution: Fertilize with a quick release nitrogen fertilizer and prevent drought stress. Red thread is more severe on lawns low in vigor and when nitrogen is limited.

Slugs and Snails (Mollusks)

Problem: Damages to leaves, flowers, fruits, and other succulent plant parts with silvery mucous trails. This damage normally is shaped like irregular holes with smooth edges.

Cause: Slugs and Snails.

Solution: A combination of many techniques will be most effective at reducing slug and snail populations and minimizing damage to your garden. March, April, May, June and October are the best months to monitor activities. Minimize problem by selecting resilient plants and adopting gardening practices listed in the 'Managing Slugs and Snails' handout at www.cmastergardeners.org

Treating with commercial bait in autumn results in fewer egg-laying adults to build the pest population. Follow the directions on the package for safety and optimum results.

Cedar Tree – Flagging (Environmental)

Problem: Brown branches become very obvious by early fall. It affects old foliage and generally is uniformly distributed in the canopy. Current year growth at branch tips remains green. The dead foliage is blown or washed out of the plant in fall and winter. The plant typically resumes its healthy appearance by spring.

Cause: Evergreen plants, including conifers and broad-leaf types, naturally shed some old foliage each year. Stress factors, such as insufficient water, hot winds, construction damage or other root disturbance, poor planting procedures, or recent planting can promote flagging.

Solution: Additional irrigation may be needed during summer drought. Avoid disturbing soil inside the root zone which generally goes beyond the drip line of the canopy.

Winter Injury (Environmental)

Problem: Broken branches, dead flower buds, brown leaves, cracks in tree bark, dead roots.

Cause: Winter injury may result from extreme cold temperatures, frozen soil, drying winds, snow load on branches, water freezing in bark, or early frost.

Solution: Prune out dead branches and leaves. Follow proper pruning procedures to ensure large branches are cut in three steps and smaller ones are cut to an outside bud at 45-degree angle. Check cracks in bark for insects and, if found, remove them. Before removing a plant wait until active growth begins to be sure it is dead.

Master Gardener™ Advice

- Call Home Horticulture Helpline: 503-655-8631 (Clackamas County), 503-821-1150 (Washington County), or 503-445-4608 (Multnomah County).
- For more 10-Minute University™ handouts and class schedule, visit www.cmastergardeners.org.
- Look for Master Gardeners at area Farmers' Markets.

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