

Down the Garden Path



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GARDEN

Pruning and Propagating Raspberries

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It's time to sharpen up the pruners and head to the raspberry patch for a bit of midsummer gardening. Raspberries grow long stems (canes) that are biennial, meaning, they produce foliage the first year, flowers and then fruit the second year. The second year canes then die after the fruit is harvested. The specific pruning technique depends on which type of raspberries you're raising.

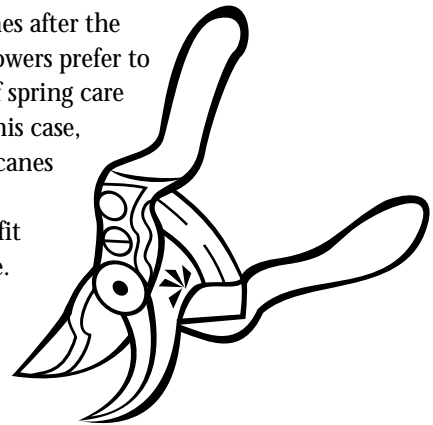
Summer-bearing red and yellow raspberries should be pruned to remove all old fruiting canes completely down to the ground. Everbearing raspberries produce a summer crop on the canes which fruited the previous fall. Remove these canes after the summer crop is harvested. Some growers prefer to sacrifice the summer crop for ease of spring care and to create a larger fall crop. In this case, no summer pruning is required; all canes are mowed off in spring.

Black and purple raspberries benefit from two types of pruning technique. Like other raspberries, remove the fruiting canes after harvest is complete. Then tip prune the top 3-4 inches of the new 1-year old canes to encourage more branching which should result in more berries.

While you're pruning, you'll probably notice that your raspberry plants are propagating like bunny rabbits! Red raspberries tend to produce small plants growing nearby that come from the roots of the mother plant. These new plants are called suckers and can be divided from the mother plant with a sharp spade and replanted in the desired location (could be your neighbors yard!)

Black and purple raspberries often have canes that are so long, the tips have bent over to the soil and may be forming new roots if the soil is moist. Covering the tips with 2-4 inches of soil will help encourage rooting. Next spring, the rooted tips can be severed from the mother plant with a sharp spade and replanted.

Keep in mind that older raspberry plantings may be infected with virus. Propagating from virus-infected plants will pass the virus on to the new planting. Check your plants for signs of disease (yellowing, spots, wilting) before propagating.



YARD

Population Thresholds and Control of White Grubs

Tim Gibb, Entomologist and Zac Reicher, Extension Turfgrass Specialist

The population level of white grubs that warrants a chemical treatment depends on many factors and is therefore difficult to determine. Type of turfgrass, its health, intended use, soil and weather conditions are all factors that play a role in determining when treatments are required.

The first rule of thumb is to always remember is that your real concern is to 'protect the turfgrass from damage' not to annihilate every last grub. With that in mind, you should realize that just finding a few grubs in the turfgrass does not automatically warrant reaching for the insecticide.

As a general rule of thumb, an insecticide treatment is justified when 8 grubs per square foot are found. However, remember that white grubs prune the roots of grass plants and thus primary damage is from water stress. Your tolerance may raise or lower depending on the moisture conditions of the turf. Cool weather, ample precipitation, and/or irrigation will minimize the damage of white grubs, thus raising the treatment threshold.

Additionally, site is a major factor in decision making. For instance, you might have a much higher tolerance of damage in your back lawn versus the front lawn. Proper turf maintenance including mowing high and ample fall fertilization will allow the plant to withstand some feeding damage, raising the treatment threshold. On the other hand, mowing too low, poor soils, or compaction will lower the treatment threshold because the turf will be unhealthy and unable to withstand much feeding.

When insecticides are warranted, the newer insecticides like Merit and Mach2 are very effective on white grubs, but they must be applied by early to mid August. After that, the more traditional products such as Sevin should be used. If grub control is attempted much later than early September, Dylox is the product of choice on the larger grubs. All of these products should be watered in immediately after application.

Another option, if you decide not to apply an insecticide, is to irrigate more frequently during August and September. Often the turfgrass will outgrow the grub feeding damage if water stress can be avoided.



OVER THE BACK FENCE

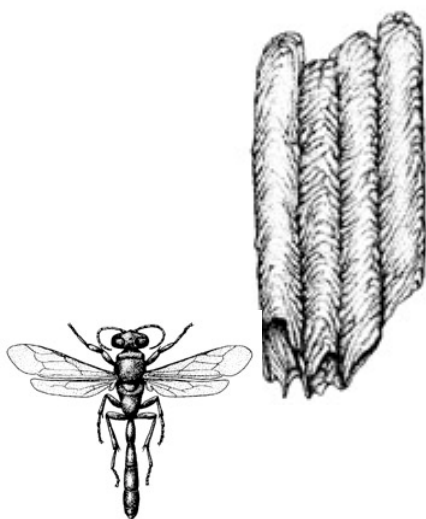
Q: Every year when I harvest my sweet corn, I find at least a few ears with these big gray-black swellings. What causes them?

A: It sounds like you are describing a fungal disease called common smut. This disease is common on sweet corn, popcorn, and dent corn. A smut gall contains black powdery mass of fungal spores that are covered by grayish white corn tissue. Although this disease can look quite unappealing, it is considered an edible delicacy, known as *cuitlacoche*, in Mexico. This fungus infects plants at points of injury on above-ground plant parts. Therefore, it is common to have smut in the ear, because insects may feed on the silks, thus creating injury and a point of entry for the fungus. -- *Peggy Sellers*



Q: In our shed, there are these nests that look like tubes of mud lined up in a row. Are they made by a wasp?

A: You are most-likely describing a mud dauber nest. Mud Daubers are miniature wasps. They are most often found associated with their nests which consist of parallel tubes of mud resembling miniature organ pipes. The nest is built on the flat surfaces of roof overhangs, eaves, and the undersides of wood and rocks. Each cell within a tube is filled with paralyzed spiders and a single wasp egg. The cell is usually filled and sealed in a single day. These wasps do not aggressively defend their nests, as do honey bees, yellow jackets and other more social wasps, however, they can sting if provoked. When they nest away from where humans live or work, they can actually be considered beneficial because they prey on spiders. In these cases, controls are not needed. Should the wasps become a nuisance, the wasps can be treated with a wasp and hornet aerosol spray, after which the nest can be scraped away with a putty knife and disposed of to prevent the emergence of developing mud daubers. -- *Carrie Lapaire (reviewed by Tim Gibb)*



Mud dauber and nests.

Editor's Note: These images were taken from the The Ohio State University Extension Publication, HYG-2078-95, Mud Daubers.

THE GRAPE VINE

Plantbugs

Cliff Sadof, Extension Entomologist

Bugged by spotted or distorted leaves, dying flowers, distorted fruits and vegetables? Well you just may be bugged by true plant bugs. Plant bugs have been causing quite a few problems throughout Indiana landscapes. When **plant bugs** feed they juices from expanding young leaves or flower bud, they can kill portions of actively growing tissue and distort leaves, flowers and fruit.

On expanded leaves plant bugs remove the green chlorophyll from leaves, leaving them to appear stippled with white spots when the plant bug has removed sap from green leaf tissue that contains chlorophyll. Some species kill portions of leaf tissue as they feed and leave behind circular areas of brown dead spots. The liquid excrement of most plant bugs is deposited as a black tar spot that is diagnostic for many pest species.

Although many natural enemies of plant bugs are known, their use has not been explored for controlling this pest on deciduous trees. Pesticide applications should target nymphs because eggs are not affected. Determine this stage by looking for spiny nymphs near egg masses on leaf undersides and monitoring to determine egg hatch. Short residual materials, like soaps, oils, or pyrethrins, can be effective on nymphs if coverage is adequate. Systemic pesticides such as Orthene (Acephate) or Merit (imidacloprid) are also very effective. Topical foliar applied materials can also provide effective control.

Common Plant Bugs in Indiana

Plant Distorters	Part Attacked	Host	Key ID Feature
Honey locust plant bug	leaves	honeylocust	lime green
Tarnished plant bug	flowers & fruit	fruit trees, lilac, many others	brownish
Potato leaf hopper	leaves	Red maple, many others	lime green
Producers of Brown Spots			
Producers of	Part Attacked	Host	Key ID Feature
Four-lined plant bug	Leaves	Many perennials & shrubs	Yellow & black stripes
Producers of White Stipples			
Producers of	Part Attacked	Host	Key ID Features
Yucca bug	Leaves	Yuccas	Orange & brown
Eastern ash plant bugs	Leaves	Ash	Amber color
Lace bugs	Leaves	Many species	Lacey wings

HOME

Strawberry Root Weevil

Tim Gibb, Extension Entomologist

The strawberry root weevil often becomes a pest in houses during the midsummer months. The weevils are black snout beetles about 1/4 inch long. The grubs feed upon roots of strawberries, small fruits, evergreens, nursery stock, and other plants. The weevils that result from these grubs cannot fly but crawl about in large numbers and often enter homes in search of a place to hibernate. They cause no damage indoors other than being annoying.

The weevils can be kept out of homes by spraying foundation walls and adjacent soil around buildings with a labeled insecticide so as to form a barrier strip about 10 feet wide over which the insects cannot crawl. As with any pesticide, read and follow label directions.

Weevils indoors can be picked up and destroyed with a vacuum sweeper attachment. Several other weevils with similar habits may also enter homes. These include the Asiatic oak weevil, a Japanese weevil, and the black vine weevil. Control procedures are the same as for the strawberry root weevil.

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