

Larry Crouse

Extension Horticulture Agent

## **CONTROLLING WILD VIOLETS IN LAWNS**

One of the most difficult weeds to control in lawns is the wild violet. Even combination products that contain 2,4-D, MCPP and Dicamba such as Trimec, Weed-Out and most formulations of Weed-B-Gon do not do a good job. Products with triclopyr give much better control though more than one treatment will likely be needed. A couple of products that contain triclopyr on the homeowner side are Turflon Ester and Weed-B-Gon Chickweed, Clover & Oxalis. (Note: There are several formulations of Weed-B-Gon but only Weed-B-Gon Chickweed, Clover & Oxalis contains triclopyr.) Both products listed above are labeled for tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass. Do not use products containing triclopyr on bermudagrass as severe injury will occur. Weed-B-Gon Chickweed Clover & Oxalis is labeled for buffalograss and zoysia (Turflon Ester is not) but lawns will likely show some temporary browning after application.

Spray on calm days when temperatures are below 85 deg. F to avoid damage to nearby plants.

### ***Ash/Lilac Borer***

**Note:** *Ash/Lilac Borer is a different insect than Emerald Ash Borer. Ash/Lilac Borer has been around for many years while Emerald Ash Borer has been confirmed in only about 5 or 6 counties in the Northeast part of the state.*

If you have had problems with canes or stems of lilac and privet suddenly wilting, or ash trees that show borer holes in the trunk and larger branches, the ash/lilac borer may be to blame. This insect causes the base of infested lilac stems to swell and the bark to separate from the wood. A fine sawdust-like material is present around holes in the canes. Ash and mountain ash also are affected. The borer attacks the trunk, which may cause bark to swell and crack if there are repeated infestations. Ash/lilac borers overwinter as larvae in infested trees and shrubs. Moths generally begin to emerge in mid to late April. Emergence peaks in May, dwindles by mid to late June and ends by the first week of July. However, this varies by year. The moth has clear wings and resembles a wasp. There is one generation per year. Public and commercially managed properties often use pheromone traps to determine the presence of adults. Spray treatments are started seven to 10 days after capture of the first moths. Sprays also can be timed using phenology, the practice of timing one event by another. The first spray for ash/lilac borer should be applied when the Vanhoutte spirea is in full to late bloom. This is often about the third week in April but can be as early as late March and as late as mid-May. Apply a second spray four weeks after the first. Thoroughly treat the trunk and larger limbs of ash or the lower portion of the stems of lilac or privet. Heavily infested ash should be cut and burned during the fall and winter. Infested stems of lilac or privet should be removed as well. Bifenthrin or permethrin (Hi-

Yield Garden, Pet, and Livestock Insect Control and 38 Plus Turf, Termite and Ornamental Insect Control) are labeled for control. Though there are a number of homeowner products that contain one or the other of these two ingredients, the permethrin products listed above are the only ones I've found that lists the ash/lilac borer on the label with directions for control.

## ***Mole Control***

Though moles spend most of their time underground, the damage they cause above ground is all too visible. Meandering paths of upheaved soil are evidence of the small mammals foraging for food. Some tunnels may be abandoned soon after being built while others are travel lanes and used for a longer period of time. Even though moles do not feed on plant matter, they can still cause damage by disturbing roots and uprooting small plants. Numerous home remedies have been concocted to control moles including chewing gum, noisemakers, broken glass, bleaches, windmills, and human hair. None have been found to provide consistent and reliable control. Poison baits also fail to work because moles feed on earthworms and grubs, not vegetable matter. Even grub control products are ineffective as they do not control earthworms, and earthworms are the primary food source for moles. The best control method is the use of traps. There are three types of traps (harpoon, choker, and scissor-jawed) and each can be effective but may take some time to master. Try the following suggestions. Moles use some tunnels more than others. Use a broomstick or something similar to poke holes in a number of runs. Check a day later to see which runs have been "repaired." These are the active runs and should be used for trap placement. Place a trap in an active run by excavating soil, placing the trap and then replacing loose soil. Secure the trap so that the recoil will not lift the trap out of the ground. Make sure the triggering mechanism is in the center of the run. Finally, push down two more holes, one on each side of the trap. Moles should be caught when they try to repair the tunnel. Move traps if no moles are caught within three days. For more information as well as "How-to" videos, see <http://www.wildlife.k-state.edu/species/moles/index.html>.

## ***Butterfly Gardening***

Butterfly gardening is becoming more popular with Kansans. Providing for the basic needs of butterflies, such as food, shelter and liquids, will encourage butterflies to visit this summer. There are a number of plants that attract butterflies. However, different species of butterflies prefer different plants. Using a variety of plant material that vary in blooming times of day and year helps attract a diverse group of visitors. Plant groups of the same plant together; a single plant is difficult for a butterfly to detect. If trying to attract a certain species of butterfly, learn which plant(s) that butterfly prefers, and then emphasize that plant in your planting. Annuals that attract butterflies include ageratum, cosmos, French marigold, petunia, verbena and zinnia.

Perennials and shrubs can be split into those that bloom early, mid-season and late. Good choices for those that bloom early are allium, chives, forget-me-not and lilac. Bee balm, butterfly bush, black-eyed Susan, buttonbush, butterfly weed, daisy, daylily, gaillardia, lavender, lily, mint, phlox, privet, sunflower and veronica are fitting picks for mid-season bloom. Late bloomers include aster, glossy abelia and sedum. There are other things you can do to encourage butterflies. Butterflies are cold-blooded and like open areas where they can sun themselves on

cool days and shade to cool off when the sun is too intense. Butterflies also need water. A simple way to make a butterfly pool is to take a bucket, fill it with gravel, and bury it to the rim. Now add water, sugar water or sweet drinks so they can land on the gravel but still reach the liquid.

Kansas State University Cooperative Extension Office

206 N. Griffith, Suite A

El Dorado, Kansas 67042