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## THE GRAPEVINE



### IT'S STILL TOO EARLY TO SPRAY FOR BAGWORMS

Timing is critical in many things, including controlling bagworms. Though handpicking is effective through much of the year, often it is impractical because of the sheer number of bagworms. However, if you only see a few bags, now would be a good time to pick them off and destroy them. As I mentioned above, large populations of bagworms can make handpicking impractical. In such cases, spraying is recommended. New bagworms will likely hatch and leave the mother's bag sometime in May or early June but spraying is usually not recommended until June 10<sup>th</sup>. Spraying now will be ineffective because the young are too well protected inside their mother's bag. Watch for an article on when and what to spray a bit later in the season

### *Poison Ivy Identification and Control*

Learning to identify poison ivy is vital if you wish to avoid the rash that accompanies exposure. Unfortunately, poison ivy can make identification difficult because it occurs in three forms: an erect woody shrub, a groundcover that creeps along the ground, and a woody vine that will climb trees. When poison ivy climbs, it forms numerous aerial roots that give the vine the appearance of a fuzzy rope. The leaves of poison ivy also vary. Though the compound leaf always has three leaflets, the leaf margins may be toothed, incised, lobed or smooth. The size of the leaves also can vary, although usually the middle leaflet is larger than the other two. Also, the middle leaflet is the only one with a long stalk; the other two are closely attached to the petiole (leaf stem). The number of leaves gives rise to the saying: "Leaves of three, let it be!" Poison ivy is often confused with Virginia creeper or Woodbine. Each of these vines, however, has five leaflets rather than three.

There are three methods commonly used to eradicate poison ivy.

These include pulling or grubbing out the plants by hand, cutting off the vine, and then treating the cut stump or the regrowth, and spraying the plants directly. The method used depends somewhat on the plant's growth form. If the plant is growing as a groundcover, direct spray or grubbing the plant out is often used. If grubbing, wear gloves and a long-sleeved shirt. The soil must be moist for grubbing to work well. Wash the clothes and yourself immediately after you finish. It might also be a good idea to rinse the washing machine. If the plant is in the shrub form, direct spray is the most common control method. If the plant is a woody vine that has climbed a tree, the preferred method is to cut the plant off at the base and treat the sprouts after they emerge. Some triclopyr herbicides also have instructions on treating a freshly cut stump directly. Triclopyr (Brush-B-Gon Poison Ivy Killer, Hi Yield Brush & Stump Killer) is most often used for poison ivy control. Other Herbicides that can be used include glyphosate (Roundup, Killzall Weed and Grass Killer, Nutgrass, Poison Ivy and VineKiller) or dicamba. Poison ivy is tough. Repeat applications may be necessary.

### *Fruit Sprays and Spray Water pH*

The most common fungicide used in fruit tree sprays is captan. Unfortunately, this product is subject to alkaline hydrolysis. Alkaline hydrolysis is a process whereby certain pesticides will break down when mixed with high pH water. So let's say you mix up your spray mixture by adding captan to 5 gallons of water. If that water has a pH of 7, the captan will break down so that only half of it will still be present in 8 hours. However, if the water you use has a pH of 10, half the captan will break down in 2 minutes. Malathion used to be the most common insecticide used for fruit pest control by gardeners but is becoming more difficult to find. It isn't nearly as sensitive to alkaline hydrolysis as captan but still will break down under high pH conditions. Fortunately, it is stable at a pH between 5 and 7. Lambda-cyhalothrin, found in Bonide Fruit Tree & Plant Guard, is a relatively new product for home fruit pest control that also is stable between a pH of 5 to 7. Note that alkaline hydrolysis does not affect all pesticides. Captan is the exception, not the rule. Cornell University has a listing of pesticides and their sensitivity to alkaline hydrolysis. So, how do you bring down the pH of your spray water if it is high? Commercial people use buffering agents but that may be difficult for homeowners to find. Food grade citric acid can help. If you have a pH of 8.0, add 2 ounces of this citric acid per 100 gallons of

water (1 and 1/4 teaspoons per 10 gallons) to bring the pH down to about 5.5. You can call your local water department to find out what your pH is. In El Dorado our city water is 8.0 to 8.1.

### ***Delay Planting Winter Squash and Pumpkins***

Though this time of the growing season is a good time to plant most of our warm-season crops such as tomatoes and peppers, it is best to delay planting of winter squash and pumpkins until about mid-June. Planting those two crops now will result in a crop that is mature enough to be attractive to the first generation of squash bugs in July. Delaying until about June 20 will allow plants to escape attack by the first generation. There will be a second generation of squash bugs that will hatch in August. Plant will need to be protected from that generation. Permethrin formulas such as Hi Yield Garden, Pet & Livestock spray are recommended.

### ***Blackspot of Roses***

A common disease of roses is blackspot, a fungus disease that can cause defoliation of susceptible plants. Look for dark, circular lesions with feathery edges on the top surface of the leaves and raised purple spots on young canes. Infected leaves will often yellow between spots and eventually drop. The infection usually starts on the lower leaves and works its way up the plant. Blackspot is most severe under conditions of high relative humidity (>85%), warm temperatures (75 to 85 degrees F) and six or more hours of leaf wetness. Newly expanding leaves are most vulnerable to infection. The fungus can survive on fallen leaves or canes and is disseminated primarily by splashing water. Cultural practices, particularly sanitation, are the first lines of defense.

1. Don't plant susceptible roses unless you are willing to use fungicide sprays. Purdue University has a list of blackspot resistant varieties.
2. Keep irrigation water off the foliage. Drip irrigation works well with roses.
3. Plant roses in sun in areas with good air movement.
4. Remove diseased leaves that have fallen and prune out infected rose canes.

If needed, protect foliage with a regular spray program (10- to 14-day schedule) of effective fungicides. Recommended fungicides include tebuconazole (BioAdvanced Disease Control for Roses, Flowers and Shrubs, BioAdvanced All-In-One Rose & Flower Care), myclobutanil (Immunox, F-Stop Lawn & Garden Fungicide) and chlorothalonil (Broad Spectrum Lawn & Garden Fungicide, Garden Disease Control, others).

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