

Garden Chatter

By LOBBING BIGELOW

There are many things which may happen to your lawn during the summer months but, unfortunately for the lawn moth, he gets the blame. In a previous column I discussed a few of the things that could be done to help keep your turf green this year. But we should also bear in mind some turf pests and their control.

The presence of injurious insects should be confirmed before insecticides are applied. The pyrethrum test will indicate the presence or absence of larvae of lawn moths, skippers, the Lucerne moth and cutworms. Use two teaspoons of a water soluble pyrethrum preparation (2% pyrethrins) to a gallon of water and apply it over a square yard of turf. You will see the larvae on the surface within 10 minutes if they are present. The moth itself fluttering about is not always an indication.

Skippers attack bentgrass in the main and are about an inch long and brownish yellow in color, resembling a cutworm, only the segments behind the head are smaller than the head and the rest of the body.

Cutworms are fat-bodied and are from an inch to two inches long. They are most injurious to bentgrasses and cause severe damage.

The larvae of the Lucerne moth resemble the sod webworm but are a little longer. They feed mainly on clover and other legumes and are not too common in this area.

White grubs at times are most injurious. They are about an inch long when fully grown and very fat. They are not too active and can further be recognized by the legs at the head end.

Billbugs feed on the roots of grasses and are quite often very serious. They are small, white, legless and from 1/4 to 3/8 inch long.

Leafhoppers are small, sucking insects from 1/8 to 1/4 of an inch in length. They actually resemble midge sized grasshoppers. Both adults and nymphs are injurious and can be noticed hopping about in large numbers when walking across or mowing the lawn. Symptoms of injury are a drying out of the grass somewhat similar to lack of water or water penetration.

The clover mite is more of a household pest than a lawn pest. Large populations may build up on grasses, shrubs, weeds and other plants and then become a nuisance by invading the home. The mite is very tiny, about 1/30th inch in length with long front legs. The legs are orange colored and the body may vary from brown to green.

Lawn moths, skippers, Lucerne moths, cutworms, white grubs can be held under control with a combination of aldrin and dieldrin either in a spray or dust form. The grubs will die slower than the others so do not be disappointed if they are still around after using the poison.

Leafhoppers are easily controlled by the use of malathion as are the clover mites. Repeated applications are necessary, however.

Billbugs are kept under control by chlordane spray or dusts.

Examine your turf and see just what type of insect that you have and use the proper control and in the case of severe infestation repeat as necessary.

Shrubs Provide Ground Cover

On hillside, under spreading trees, in hot, dry spots, in colorless areas, few plant-types will serve as well as a ground cover. Fast growing shrubs, too, often make outstanding ground covers and quickly brighten a garden spot where no other plant can grow.

For the milder areas, such a shrub is the Coprosma Kirkii, a low-growing species of the Mirror Plant. Rapid growing, it makes a fine deep ground cover if it is pinched back. St. Johnswort in its spreading form is called Aaron's Beard (Hypericum calycinum) and it is another good shrub selection for covering the ground. Its foliage is green or yellow-green and it produces bright yellow flowers in summer.

Several prostrate species of the Juniper fill in quickly to provide a pleasing light green

or blue green low foreground for other plants. Juniperus conferta, the Shore Juniper, grows one to two feet high, an informal mat of blue-green needle-like foliage. As its popular name indicates, it will tolerate salt spray and submergence. The Tamarix Juniper (J. Sabina tamariscifolia) grows only 18 inches high and it has needle and scale-like leaves in light green.

In sun or shade, dry or moist soil, the Bearberry Cotoneaster (Cotoneaster Dameri) makes a handsome woody evergreen ground cover. Good for close up viewing, it is neat all year round.

Look into the many planting possibilities of shrubs as quick ground covers, recommends the California Assn. of Nurserymen.

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- ### GARDENER'S CHECKLIST
1. California Natives, many of which are ideal for that "hard-to-water-spot," should be planted now.
 2. Watch Tuberos Begonia leaves for evidence of mildew. Your nurseryman can suggest a control.
 3. Earwigs and ants can be readily controlled with chlordane.
 4. Bedding plants can be planted all through the summer in California. Petunias, Marigolds, Snapdragons and Dwarf Dahlias planted now will be in full bloom in a very short time.
 5. You can sow these seeds now for fall and winter color: Primula, Malacoides, Stocks, Snapdragons, Pansies, Calendula and Violas.

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