



PHOTO: BRUCE WATT, UNIVERSITY OF MAINE



PHOTO: JOSEPH BERGER

Some unwanted household guests this fall may include the multicolored Asian lady beetle (left) and the boxelder bug (above).

Fall Household Pests: What to Expect

BROOKINGS – The recent climate update predicts that the majority of South Dakota is still a few weeks away from the first hard frost of the season. While this is good news for crops and gardens, it does mean a longer season for insect and other arthropod activity.

“For insects and arthropods that are showing up inside, the best course of action is to determine their point of entry and close it,” Amanda Bachmann, SDSU Extension Pesticide Education & Urban Entomology Field Specialist.

Bachmann encourages homeowners to check around windows and doors for gaps and inspect any cracks or crevices in walls and foundations.

In most cases, Bachmann said an insecticide is not necessary for the fall invaders and they can be managed with a vacuum, empty

jar, shoe or a broom.

She outlines other ways to keep common fall pests out of the house below.

FLIES

This is the time of year when cluster flies and picture winged flies start moving into structures. Cluster flies will survive the winter indoors, and are often noticed on mild winter days. They do not reproduce indoors.

Picture winged flies also move indoors, but they don't survive the winter.

House flies are also active in ending up inside. They reproduce on decaying organic matter, so it is possible to have a breeding population inside that is active all winter.

“Sanitation, such as taking out trash regularly, cleaning drains, etc. is the best way to handle small populations,” she said.

BOXELDER BUGS

This is another example of an insect with adults that spend the winter indoors. “Boxelder bugs are harmless, and should just be swept up or vacuumed,” Bachmann said.

She explained that their activity increases during warm days in the fall and during the winter when they will congregate near sunny windows.

MULTICOLORED ASIAN LADY BEETLE

The multicolored Asian

lady beetle is an introduced lady beetle (aka ladybug) species and it will congregate in structures as the weather cools.

“Multicolored Asian lady beetle activity generally increases in the fall as crops are being harvested and they are seeking shelter for overwintering,” Bachmann said.

Activity of this lady beetle increases on warm fall days, and they will congregate on structures. They are often active through the entire winter, with increased

activity on warm days.

“Multicolored Asian lady beetles emit a pungent odor when disturbed, and are best removed using an empty jar with an available lid,” Bachmann said.

She added that there are reports that when canister vacuums are used to remove this pest the odor persists in the canister for extended periods of time.

MOSQUITOES

Mosquitoes will remain active until the first frost. It is important to continue to

wear protective clothing and personal repellents when engaged in outdoor activities, as it is still possible to get West Nile Virus in the fall.

WHAT INSECT IS THIS?

If you find an insect indoors and would like help identifying it, please submit a clear picture to the Plant Diagnostic Clinic at <http://www.sdstate.edu/ps/plant-clinic/>, or contact Amanda Bachmann at 605-773-8120.

Garden Pros Share Dirt On Mistakes That Drive Them Crazy

BY BARBARA MAHANY

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You would be wrong, so wrong, if you imagined a gaggle of garden gurus shuffling off to the potting shed, whispering, trading reports of the trowel-and-error so often committed by the unwitting, the innocent, the ill-informed home gardener.

Why, these gardening wizards — the ones whose lifework is making things grow, and grow beautifully — they are gentle folk (deep down, anyway), and they're hard-pressed (OK, so maybe some are chomping at the bit) to cough up a litany of dumb stuff they see and hear from the front lines of Amateur Grower Land, the stumbling ground where plain folk like you and me toil with our trimmers.

Here's where your trusty garden scribe leaps in to do the dirty work: We've cajoled a phalanx of in-the-know garden intelligentsia and begged them to please divulge the most egregious botanical blunders they've witnessed out in the plots where the amateurs roam. The dirt-stained sins committed over and over. The horticultural high jinks that really should be outlawed.

Here's a litany of home-grown screw-ups, and ways you might right your wrongs:

- Stop looking for easy solutions. If there was one dumb idea that made the pros crazy-mad, it was our infatuation with the notion that you can shortcut your way to a glorious grab-n'-go garden.

- “There is no secret! No answer in a bottle!” Margaret Roach, a longtime garden writer, “A Way to Garden” blogger and podcaster, practically shouts from her 2.3-acre Hudson Valley plot. Her inbox, every year, is clogged with hundreds of emails asking: “What's your secret for getting rid of weeds?” I write back and say, ‘I knelt down, and I weeded.’

- “It's just like wrinkle cream,” she froths on. “There's this allure, this illusion of the instant, no-work solution. Well, here's the secret: You have to go out and do it, and then you have to do it again. One of the big ahas of gardening is there is no secret.”

- Natural? Are you sure? Along the same lines, don't believe everything that says “all-natural.”

Don't assume that “au naturel” equals safe — for you or the planet. This corollary, preached most vociferously by Roach and echoed by a handful of others, begs gardeners to read the fine print. If the instructions insist you don safety goggles and hazmat suit — even if butterflies flutter across the label — chances are there's “greenwashing” going on, says Roach, explaining that

it's a ploy to make you think it's earth-friendly. This plays into our “lust for the instant fix,” says Roach. “It's not just a dumb mistake; it's a dangerous mistake.”

- Mulching madness: “There is no plant on earth, herbaceous or otherwise, that has any genetic knowledge of how to live amid an accumulation of wood,” says plant grower, garden designer and author Roy Diblik of Northwind Perennial Farm in Burlington, Wis. “We are the only nation on Earth that gardens with wood.”

So begins Diblik's diatribe against the overscattering of wood chips, wherever weeds trespass. Diblik wants gardeners to use mulch from their own plants — shredded leaves or compost from your garden, for example. “Your goal, remember, is to let the plants live in and with their own decaying leaves and stems, never again removing them from the garden,” he writes in his book, “The Know Maintenance Perennial Garden” (Timber Press).

- Give trees enough growing space. The gardening experts we talked to went berserk at the mention of young trees being squished into pots, or planted hard up against the house — blatantly ignoring a tree's raison d'être: growing.

- “It's the single thing I am forever contemplating having printed onto little notes to keep on my dashboard, so I can stick them in people's mailboxes whenever I drive by,” says Kristin Schleiter, associate vice president for outdoor gardens at the New York Botanical Garden.

- “Find out how big your tree will someday be,” she instructs. “And don't plant it one foot from the foundation. Sure, they look cute in those little pots at your front door. But they will grow into mammoth, mammoth trees.”

- Don't plant in dribs and drabs. If there's anything that rankles the garden elite, it's the beginner's tendency to buy one of everything on the garden racks. And to do so in a single binge.

- “Don't buy 1,000 different plants. Buy a larger number of just a few. Think of swoops and drifts and ribbons and rivers,” says landscape architect and author Julie Moir Messervy. And don't succumb to one-stop shopping, she warns. Resist the urge to march into the garden store in, say, April, and buy enough blooms to fill every square inch in your beds. Instead, go back once a month for your whole first season, and buy what's blooming month-by-month. That way, you'll have sweeps of bloom all season long, instead of a one-hit pointillist wonder.

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