

Bristly Rose Slugs

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I was gone for a week and when I came home I noticed that a lot of the leaves on my old fashioned rose had been stripped of all their green leaving them skeletonized and brown. A quick examination revealed the suspected culprits, bristly rose slugs. These rascals are not caterpillars, but rather a sawfly larvae. BT will not work on these larva but most of our other rose insecticides, including spinosad, will do just fine. A strong stream of water will often dislodge them to the ground where they have problems getting back up on leaves. I was not finding many live slugs so I suspect that some of our strong rains may have washed them off. There is but one generation per year so damage is normally contained to just spring time. The good news was that on my rose plant new growth was already developing! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Deadheading

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. When I talk with home gardeners about the need to dead head it has nothing to do with back hauling with an empty truck or being a fan of the rock group The Grateful Dead. What we refer to with deadheading is to remove the flowers from plants as they go past their prime. We do this for several reasons. Flowering plants want to produce seed. If you leave that flower stem on the plant it is going to put energy into making seeds rather than more flowers. Taking the flower stem off, deadheading, of especially annual flowers encourages the plant to develop more flower buds and thereby more flowers. Side dressing with a good balanced fertilizer source at the same time can help with the development of new flowers. A few flowering plants don't need to be deadheaded, but it will make the flower bed look tidier, which is the second important thing about deadheading. Keep the bed neat! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Eliminate Mosquito Breeding Sites

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Summertime temperatures and excessive rain will guarantee at least two things - mushrooms and mosquitoes. We can't do much about the mushrooms, but we can reduce mosquito populations by eliminating as many breeding sites as possible. Mosquitoes like shallow water and shallow water with vegetation like a very wet ditch, is even better. In weather like this it only takes about a week from egg to a biting adult. Pet water dishes, bird baths, literally anything that holds water for a week can breed mosquitoes. Drain as many of these OR change the water every 4 or 5 days to get rid of mosquito larva. For areas on your property that you can't drain consider using mosquito dunks or bits. These biological control products are specifically meant to control mosquitoes without harming desirable little aquatic critters! And controlling breeding does far more than spraying or fogging! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Mushrooms

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. The other thing that wet weather in May and June brings, other than mosquitoes, is mushrooms. And I've seen more than my fair share the past few weeks. While annoying there really isn't much you can do to stop them. The mushroom is the fruiting body, the seed producer if you will, of a fungus organism that is living on dead organic matter underground. That may be dead grass roots, the remnants of an old tree stump or large roots from a long gone tree. It may even be living on dying roots of a tree that is still alive - mushrooms growing at the base of a tree are not a good sign by the way. There is nothing you can do or spray to stop the mushrooms from developing in warm and wet conditions. The best that you can do is to simply knock them over as they emerge. They won't generally last long. They emerge rapidly, do their thing and then die down. But please don't ask me if they are edible. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Pinching Mums

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Garden mums are tough plants that seem to do well in full sun locations in Kansas. The flowers can last for weeks in the late summer or fall but they do have one problem. They are already producing flower buds and if left to their own doings they'd bloom way too early. So we pinch them back. At least one pinch is helpful but if you start early enough you can even get two pinches in. Pinching is done with a thumbnail, scissors or pruning shears. We normally remove about an inch of growth from the stems. This makes the mum respond by bushing out which then produces more flower buds. Now, if you get them pinched soon and you get about 4 inches of new growth, pinch them again. But, you don't want to pinch mums after about the 4th of July. Pinching later than this can delay bud development and blooming so that it happens so late in the year they risk being nipped by frost. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.