Video of the Week:  Caring for Knock-Out Roses

TURFGRASS

Orchard Grass in Tall Fescue Lawns

Orchard grass often infests tall fescue lawns. Unfortunately, orchard grass is lighter green and faster growing than tall fescue, so it is very visible. Homeowners complain of the light green tufts of grass wherever this weed has become established. Even worse, there are no herbicides that will kill the orchard grass without also killing the turf. About the only good thing about orchard grass is that it is a bunch grass and does not spread.

Orchard grass often comes in as a contaminant on grass seed, especially K-31 tall fescue. Buying good grass seed is the first line of defense against this weed. Orchard grass is a pasture grass and therefore is not found in the “weed seed” portion of the seed label. Rather, orchard grass will be listed as “other crop seed.” Try to buy grass seed that has 0.0% “other crop seed.”

Control options are few and painful. Use glyphosate (Roundup, Killzall Weed and Grass Killer, Kleeraway Systemic Weed and Grass Killer and others) to spot spray orchard grass clumps. Any lawn grasses you hit will be killed, so keep the spots sprayed as small as possible. Wait until the spots have turned brown and then cut out the clumps and replace with a small piece of sod. Large numbers of orchard grass clumps may mean it is more practical to kill the entire lawn and start over.

For information on identification including images, go to:
FLOWERS

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 are the first line of defense.

1. Don't plant susceptible roses unless you are willing to use fungicide sprays. For a list of blackspot resistant varieties, go to: [http://www.ppdl.purdue.edu/ppdl/weeklypics/3-22-04.html](http://www.ppdl.purdue.edu/ppdl/weeklypics/3-22-04.html)

2. Keep irrigation water off the foliage. Drip irrigation works well with roses.

3. Plant roses in sun in areas with good air movement to limit the amount of time the foliage is wet.

4. Remove diseased leaves that have fallen and prune out infected rose canes to minimize inoculum.

If needed, protect foliage with a regular spray program (10- to 14-day schedule) of effective fungicides. Recommended fungicides include tebuconazole (Bayer Disease Control for Roses, Flowers and Shrubs), myclobutanil (Immunox, Immunox Plus), triforine (Funginex), thiophanate methyl (Fertilome Halt) and chlorothalonil (Broad Spectrum Fungicide, Garden Disease Control, others). (WU)

ORNAMENTALS

Anthracnose on Trees

We are starting to see anthracnose on ash and sycamore. Anthracnose is a fungal disease favored by cool, wet weather. Young leaves may wither...
and turn black. On older leaves, look for brown areas that follow the major veins of the leaves. Physiological problems such as scorch or freeze damage affect the outer margin of the leaves and/or the interveinal spaces. If the disease is severe, the tree will drop heavily infected leaves. But new leaves will be formed in response to defoliation.

Other types of trees that are affected by anthracnose include birch, elm, walnut, and oak. Anthracnose seldom causes significant damage to trees in Kansas, so chemical controls are usually unnecessary. Also, fungicides do not cure infected leaves. Applying fungicides now is not recommended. (WU)

**VEGETABLES**

**Sweet Corn Primer**

It used to be simple to decide which sweet corn to plant. You simply chose a cultivar and planted when the soil temperature reached 55 degrees. Now it has become more complicated due to genetic advances in sweet corn. Breeders have found certain genes that improve “standard” sweet corn. Below is an overview of the types commonly available to homeowners.

**Standard (su):** This is our “normal” sweet corn and contains a “sugary gene” (su). Standard sweet corn should be isolated from field corn, popcorn, supersweets and ornamental corn. To isolate one type of corn from another, do not plant one type within 200 to 250 feet or be sure to have a difference of 12 to 14 days in time to maturity. Plant when the soil temperature reaches at least 55 degrees. Recommended varieties include Honey and Cream, Silver Queen, Sterling Silver, Jubilee, or Merit.

**Supersweet (sh2):** Though supersweets have up to three times the sweetness of standard sweet corns and hold their sweetness longer after harvest due to the sh2 gene, they do have some drawbacks such as tougher kernels and a lack of some of that good “corn” flavor. They also need to be isolated from other sweet corn types and are very sensitive to cooler soils. Wait until the soil temperature reaches 65 degrees before planting. Try Candy Store, Florida Staysweet, Sugar Loaf, Sweet Time, or Sweetie.

**Sugar Enhanced (se):** These are probably the most popular type of sweet corn grown due to their tender kernels, good flavor and less sensitivity to cool soils (60 degree soil temperature for planting). They hold their post-harvest sweetness longer than standard types but will not hold sweetness as long as the supersweets. The sweetness from the sugar-enhanced types is due to the “se gene.” If both parents were se types, the variety is known as an se+ or se se. If only one parent was an se type and the other an su type, then the variety will be listed as se. They do not need to be isolated other than from the supersweets. Suggested varieties include Bodacious, Ambrosia, Sweet Temptation, Delectable and Miracle.
**Triplesweet (synergistic):** The newest types of sweet corns blend the su, se and supersweet types with the goal of combining the best characteristics of each. We don’t have firm recommendations yet but you may want to try Serendipity, Polka, Avalon or Frisky. (WU)

**PESTS**

**Cankerworms**

Cankerworms, also known as inchworms are beginning to make an appearance this year. There are actually two species of cankerworm: spring cankerworm, Paleacrita vernata, and fall cankerworm, Alsophila pometeria. The spring cankerworm larvae vary in color from reddish to yellowish-brown or yellowish green and may even be blackish. Usually there is a yellowish stripe on the side of the body though this may be missing. Fall webworm larvae color ranges from light green to very dark brownish-green with a wide, dull, dark longitudinal stripe down the center of the back. Fall webworm has three pairs of prolegs while the spring cankerworm has only two. Cankerworms are also known a inchworms due to the peculiar looping motion the larvae use when moving.

Though the common names may suggest otherwise, larvae from both species appear in the spring. "Spring" and "fall" refer to when the females lay their eggs. Females are actually wingless as adults and appear almost spider-like. They must climb up the trunk to lay eggs. When the eggs hatch, the young larvae begin to feed on leaves. When mature, the larvae descend to the ground on a silk thread, burrow into the ground, spin a cocoon and pupate. There is one generation per year. The most common cankerworm in Kansas is the "spring" cankerworm.

Cankerworms feed on a wide variety of deciduous trees including oak, ash, elm, linden and apple. Larvae vary from green to reddish-brown to black and have one or more white, pale green, or black stripes. Cankerworms are general defoliators and may skeletonize leaves. Eventually, only the midribs of leaves remain.

Cankerworms can be detected by rapping on branches. This disturbs cankerworms, which betray their presence by dropping down on silken threads. If necessary, insecticidal treatments may be applied. Spraying after the insects have started dropping from the trees is too late. The damage has already been done. However, even if a healthy tree is defoliated, it will put out a new set of leaves and be fine.

Labeled insecticides include BT (Dipel or Thuricide), spinosad (Fertilome Borer, Bagworm, Leafminer & Tent Caterpillar Spray; Captain Jack's Dead Bug Brew; Monterey Garden Insect Spray), permethrin (Bonide Eight, 38 Plus), carbaryl (Carbaryl, Sevin) and cyfluthrin (Bayer Lawn and Garden Multi-Insect Killer). (WU)
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