

CHRIS' CORNER



Low-Impact Pest Control

It is time again to turn the calendar over to the next month. Where does the time go? You can definitely tell that spring fever is in the air. I recently went on a hunt for some bedding plants at a local nursery and it was jam packed with gardeners looking to beautify their landscape. While there I was asked about controlling pests using safer products. This is a question that I have been asked often. Here is a list of products that provide low-impact pest control:

Microbe-based products

- These products consist of, or are derived from, bacteria and other microbes.
- Microbe-based products, like *Bacillus thuringiensis* and spinosad, are generally safe for people and selective for pests.
- Please read and follow the label.

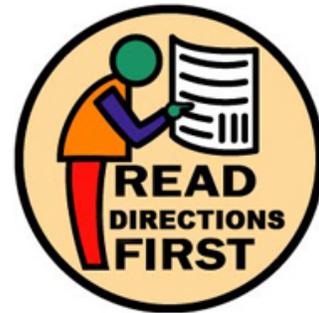
Insecticide soaps and horticultural oils

- These products kill smaller, soft-bodied arthropods like mites, aphids and scales. They only kill when sprayed directly on the pest.
- Horticultural oils are sometimes called dormant oil, Volck oil, summer oils or ultrafine spray oils.
- Commercially available versions of these products are generally safer to plants (read the label)
- Soaps and oils are among the cheapest and safest pesticides for the garden.

Botanical (plant-based) insecticides

- Plants make their own insecticides. Check the labels of these products to compare toxicity. Just because a pesticide comes from a plant doesn't mean it's safe for people.
- Botanical pesticides generally breakdown quickly when exposed to sunlight, air and water. This keeps them relatively safe for many beneficial insects.
- Look for products containing pyrethrins, neem extracts, mint oils and citrus oils.

If you decide to purchase any of these products, please read and follow the label. Remember that the label is the law. As you are out in your garden please be on the lookout for beneficial insects before you spray. They are our friends in the garden and are doing us a huge favor! Until next time, happy gardening!



Christopher Campbell