



HELPDESK HIGHLIGHTS

Weekly newsletter for Master Gardeners

WEEK 4: JULY 24-31

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TEST YOUR MASTER GARDENER SKILLS

(Answer on page 8)

Identify this weed!

IMAGES FROM HELPDESK



Please refer only to the current [VCE Pest Management Guide: Home Grounds and Animals](#) for pesticide recommendations. All pesticides recommended are at the risk of the user. Read and follow all label instructions for use, storage, and disposal. Remember, the pesticide label is the law.

EARWIGS



Relevance: Nymphs born in spring mature by late summer

Appearance: pair of pinchers at the tip of abdomen; reddish brown color; about ¾" long

Damage to plants: minimal until there is a large population, which can result in significant damage

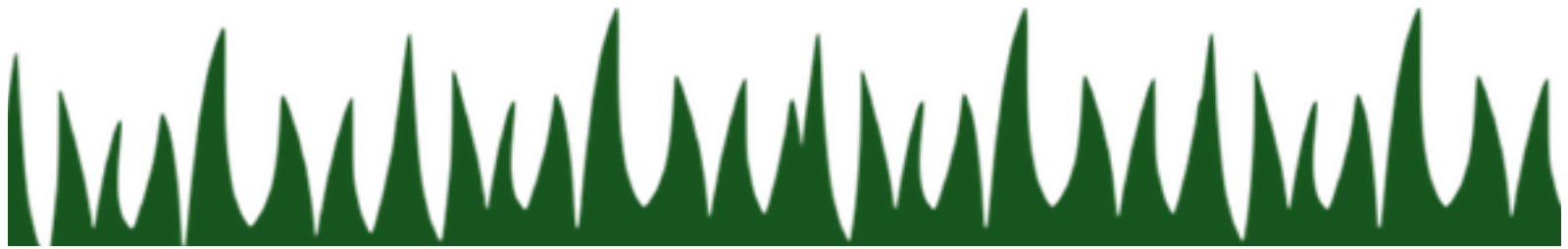
Controls: keep compost piles away from garden, persistent trapping, use floating row covers, clean up debris around the garden/home



TOP IMAGE FROM HELPDESK; BOTTOM IMAGE FROM PENN STATE UNIVESITY EARWIG



IMAGE FROM UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA EUROPEAN EARWIG DAMAGE ON CROP



EARWIGS (CONTINUED)

Earwig Traps

Tuna/Cat Food Cans: use an empty can and add ½" of vegetable oil, then place around garden, dump and refill cans with oil as they fill up with earwigs

Tubes or hoses: Place right before night time and in the morning shake out earwigs into soapy water to kill

Other traps:

Moistened, rolled newspaper

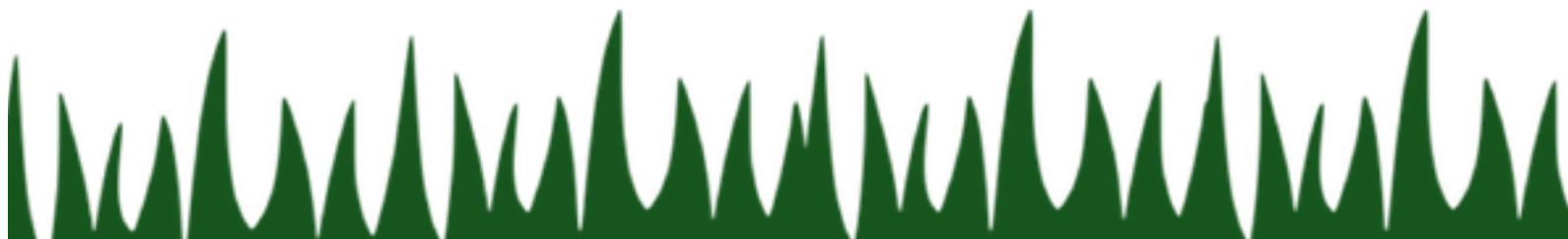
Short pieces of bamboo

More Resources for Earwig Control:

[UMD Extension: Earwigs](#)

[Penn State University: European Earwig](#)

[VCE: Earwigs](#)



PHYTOPHTHORA ROOT ROT

Relevance: grows between temperatures of 59 to 82 degrees Fahrenheit

Cause: Oomycete, also known as water molds, are a large group of aquatic and terrestrial eukaryotic organisms. Oomycetes from the *Pythiaceae* family cause phytophthora root rot of various plants including woody ornamentals and vegetables.



IMAGE FROM
UMD
EXTENSION
PHYTOPHTHORA
INFECTED ROOTS

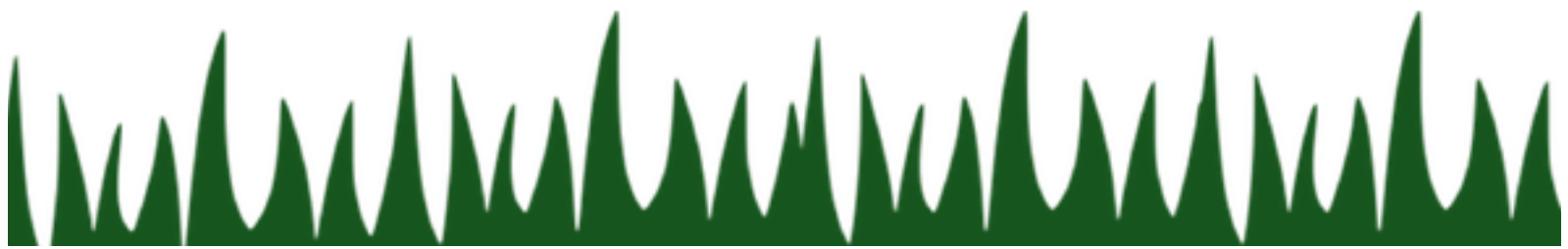


IMAGE FROM VCE
PLANT WILTING DUE TO PHYTOPHTHORA

IMAGE FROM
MISSOURI
BOTANICAL
GARDEN
PHYTOPHTHORA
DAMAGE TO
RHODODENDRON
LEAVES



IMAGE FROM UMD EXTENSION
PHYTOPHTHORA INFECTED RHODODENDRON



Phytophthora Root Rot Symptoms:**Mild**

- Smaller than normal foliage
- Foliage with nutrient deficiency-like symptoms
- Dead feeder roots
- Dark streaks up stem

Severe

- Stunting of entire plant
- Wilting
- Smaller than normal leaves/needles
- Reddish-brown discoloration of wood at soil line
- Greatly reduced root systems
- Roots with reddish-brown discoloration
- Dead feeder roots
- New shoots do not develop
- Death of plant

Ideal Conditions/Transmission:

- Poorly drained or wet soil
- Fungus is spread through splashing, overhead irrigation, runoff from an infected area
- Overwinters

Control Methods:

- Plant in well-drained soil
- Recognize wilting is not a result of under watering by determining if plant area is adequately receiving water
- Use of drain tiles to prevent rain water build up
- Grow resistant cultivars
- Remove and destroy infected plants
- Construction of raised beds
- Avoid mounding up the soil around the plant's base

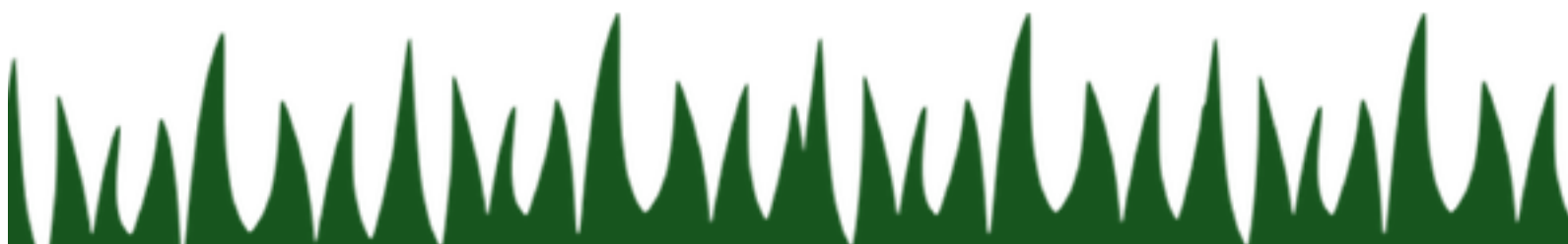
More Resources for Phytophthora Root Rot Control:

[VCE: Phytophthora Root Rot of Rhododendron and Azalea](#)

[Missouri Botanical Garden: Phytophthora Root Rot of Trees and Shrubs](#)

[Penn State Extension: Phytophthora Root Rot on Woody Ornamentals](#)

[UMD Extension: Phytophthora Root Rot - Trees and Shrubs](#)



SQUASH VINE BORER

Relevance: Eggs laid in May with 1-2 generations occurring over the summer



IMAGE FROM UMN EXTENSION
SQUASH VINE BORER LARVA



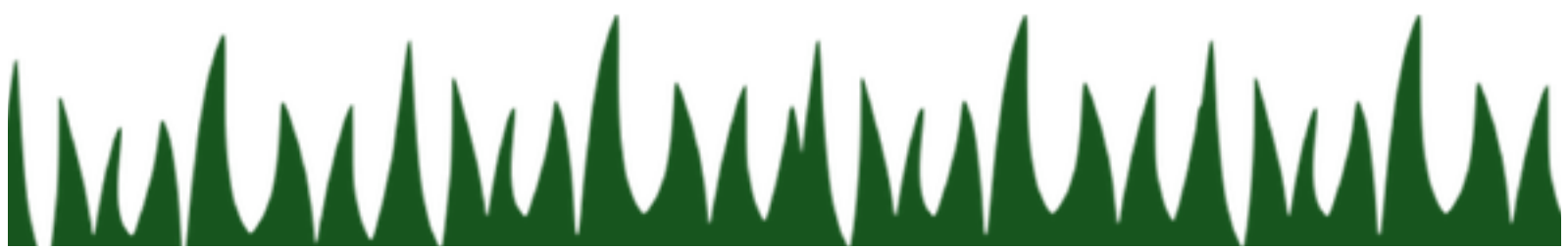
IMAGE FROM MICHIGAN STATE
EXTENSION
SQUASH VINE BORER EGGS



IMAGE FROM VCE
SQUASH VINE BORER ADULTS



IMAGE FROM UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
SQUASH VINE BORER DAMAGE ON SQUASH



SQUASH VINE BORER (CONT.)

Appearance

Eggs	Larva	Pupae	Adult
Tiny flattened ovals attached singly	Wrinkly white to cream color hairless caterpillar	Dark brown shiny with tapered ends. Cocoon: black & rough textured	Fat, black clear-winged moth with orange legs & orange and black abdomen

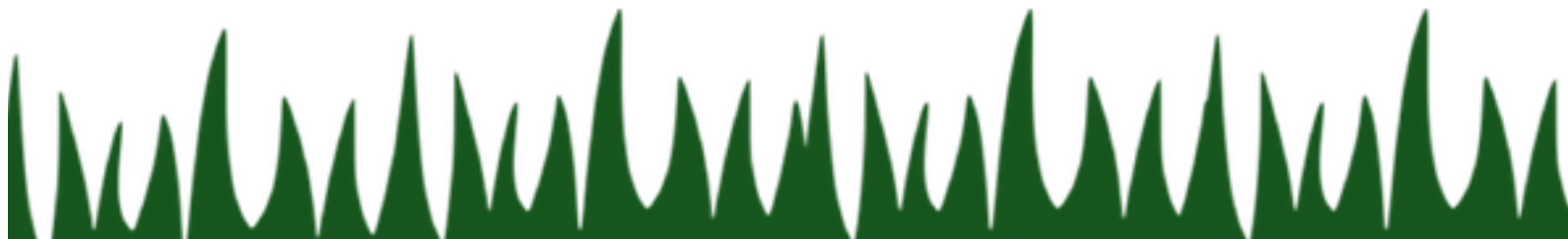
Common Host Plants: cucurbits like summer squashes, pumpkins, winter squashes, gourds, Hubbard squash and sometimes muskmelons/melon

Symptoms:

- Wilting and eventually plant death
- Tunneling larvae push greenish white sawdust-like excrement out the entrance hole
- The stem area near the entrance hole will feel mushy
- Plant's runner or entire vine wilts quickly from larval feeding

Control:

- Plant early to lessen injury, use transplants instead of seeds, or plant squash seed mid-June
- Wrap a collar of aluminum foil around lower stems
- Cover plants with floating row cover
- Inject the beneficial nematode *Stinernema carpocapsae* to kill borers
- Seal up infested vines in plastic bag



More Resources on Squash Vine Borer Control

[UMD Extension: Squash Vine Borer-Vegetables](#)

[Penn State Extension: Squash Vine Borer](#)

[VCE: Squash Vine Borer](#)

[VCE Pest Management Guide: Home Grounds and Animals](#)

TEST YOUR MASTER GARDENER SKILLS

Answer: Mugwort

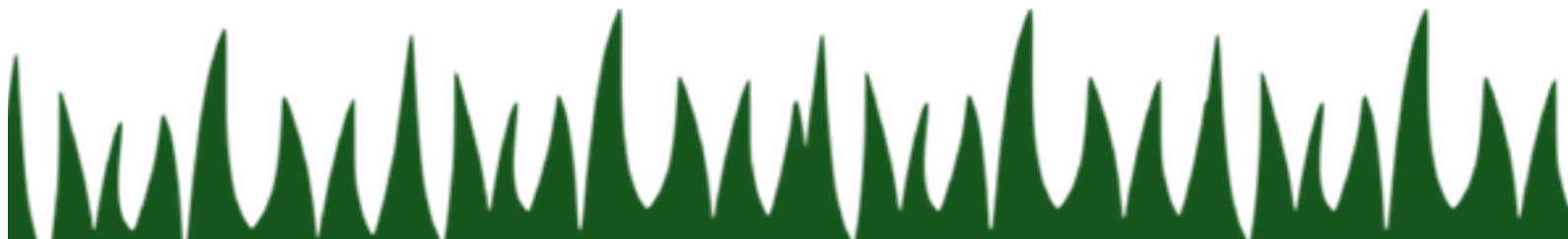
Scientific Name: *Artemisia Vulgaris L.*

Mugwort is a perennial weed that is herbaceous and invasive. It is similar to ragweed but strongly scented like chrysanthemum. The leaves are 2 to 4 inches long, 1 to 3 inches wide. The plant can grow up to five feet in height and often become woody with age. The best cultural control is to dig out the plant.

More Resources for Mugwort Control:

[VCE Extension: Identification and Control of Mugwort](#)

[VCE Pest Management Guide: Home Grounds and Animals](#)



THANK YOU FOR READING!



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