



Horticulture

LEE COUNTY
EXTENSION
SERVICE 

Lee County Gardening

Stephen H. Brown, Agriculture Program Leader - Chan S. Baichoo, Horticulture Agent - Susan Hedge, County Extension Director
3406 Palm Beach Boulevard - Fort Myers, Florida 33916 - (941) 338-3232 - FAX (941) 338-3243 - Cape Coral (941) 574-7005 - FAX (941) 574-7007

OIL SOAP SPRAY

Control of Pest on Ornamentals

Non-Insecticidal Control: Many homeowners are able to remove some pests and keep populations below damaging levels by spraying their landscape plants with a forceful stream of water. Use a garden hose with an adjustable nozzle and spray undersides of leaves and stems when such pests as aphids, mealybugs, spider mites, thrips or lacebugs appear.

An effective, environmentally safe, general purpose spray against insects or mites attacking landscape plants is a soap plus oil mixture. These are commercially available or can be homemade by mixing 2½ Tbsp liquid dishwashing detergent plus 2½ Tbsp. vegetable cooking oil (corn, soybean, peanut, or sunflower oil) per gallon of water. Thorough coverage of the undersides of leaves is very important. Apply a second application in five days. Monitor plants and reapply when needed.

Commercial formulations of *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Dipel), a bacterium, are available and provide good control of moth and butterfly larvae. This bacterium has no effect on other groups of insects including the predators and parasites.

Mechanical control is sometimes practical for small numbers of the larger insects including caterpillars, grasshoppers and beetles. Frequently, insects can be picked or knocked off the plant and destroyed. Large numbers of newly hatched caterpillar or beetle larvae may be detected by watching for freshly skeletonized leaves and destroyed in this way. After hatching, small caterpillar and beetle larvae remain on the leaf for several days. Damaged leaves can be removed and destroyed before the larvae have dispersed over the plants. Early stage lubber grasshoppers also feed in aggregates and can be hand-picked and destroyed.

Revised by: Chan Baichoo & Barbara Presnell, 12/97

In accordance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, auxiliary aids and services will be provided upon request with a three-day notice

The Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences is an Equal Employment Opportunity - Affirmative Action Employer Authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE, HOME ECONOMICS, STATE OF FLORIDA, IFAS, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND BOARDS OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COOPERATING.