

green thumb time

if nitrogen application is delayed. Plan on applying nitrogen in the fall, rather than the spring.

• If blue grass billbugs were a problem in your lawn last year, apply granular diazinon or liquid Sevin in late April to control them.

• Ignore ads for Zoysia grass. It is not recommended for Michigan lawns.

• Use dormant oil sprays to control severe scale infestations on landscape ornamentals. They will also reduce this year's mite and aphid numbers. Read product labels closely and follow directions to avoid injuring sensitive plants.

• Eliminate some of this year's bagworm population by removing bagworm cases from landscape plants. Destroy the bags — each contains hundreds of eggs.

• Control spruce gall aphids on spruce trees with sprays of lindane, malathion or diazinon at or before bud break. Or prune and destroy the green, pineapple-shaped swellings at the branch tips in late June. Brown galls contain no insects, but you may want to remove them to improve the trees appearance.

• Plant trees, shrubs and ground covers. Choose planting sites that will allow trees and shrubs plenty of room when they reach their mature size. Avoid planting tall trees under power lines or eaves, and trees or shrubs too close to buildings or over septic tanks, sewer lines or water pipes.

• Prune winter-damaged trees and shrubs. If possible wait to prune spring-flowering ornamentals. Forsythia, lilac, crabapple, magnolia, rhododendron and other early bloomers already bear the buds for this year's flowers. Shrubs that bloom after June 30 can be pruned now because their flower buds haven't formed yet.

• If the leaves of your oak or maple trees turned yellow between green veins last year, now is the time to correct the nutritional deficiencies that cause the problem. Chlorotic oak trees need iron; maple trees need manganese. Your local garden center, arborist or nurseryman can tell you what product to use and how to use it.

• A number of insects will soon become active and possibly invade living areas. Though elm leaf beetles, cluster flies, box elder bugs and ladybird (ladybug) beetles will not do any damage indoors, they may become a nuisance if they're present in large numbers. Try to gather up ladybird beetles and release them outdoors to wage war against aphids. Vacuum or swat the other insects or spot-treat with a household insecticide containing pyrethrin.

• Deter swarming winged ants from nesting in or near basement walls by spraying the foundation and any ant nests with diazinon after temperatures exceed 60 degrees F.

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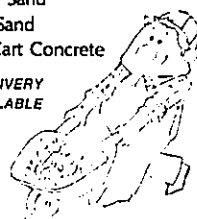
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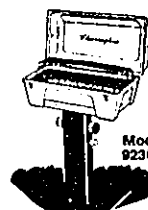
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