

# Crabgrass rears its ugly head

The soil is warming up. Crocuses and other bulbs are beginning to bloom. Trees are leafing out. Spring is here.

Recently I wrote about pruning ornamental trees. Now it's time to think about fruit tree pruning, which is a different process.

Oakland Cooperative Extension Service is offering a fruit tree pruning demonstration at an orchard near Pontiac the morning of Saturday, April 15. Bob Tritten, Michigan State University extension district fruit production specialist, will be

the instructor. If you would like to learn from an expert, call 858-0807 during business hours for information.

**CRABGRASS SEEMS** to be a problem in many lawns. This annual weed, which reproduces by seeds or from roots growing from stem nodes, is difficult to control. I recently spoke with a reader who is concerned that crabgrass has taken over much of the back yard and is wondering how to control it.

The whole area will have to be treated with a pre-emergence crabgrass herbicide, beginning this

month or early May before foraythia blossoms start to fall.

Rodale's Garden Insect, Disease & Weed Control Identification Guide, M. Smith and A. Carr (Rodale Press, \$14.95 paper, \$18.19 hard) gives an alternative to herbicide use:

"Dig out the crown of this plant and remove all stems from the lawn or garden. Because seeds germinate only when the soil is warm, fertilize lawns early in the spring to promote the growth of desired grasses and decrease the area open to crabgrass growth."

If prostrate stems form unsightly brown patches in the late summer lawn, dig out the crabgrass, fertilize

the area and reseed with a desired grass, making sure to keep the area moist."

I HOPE this information is of some help. When we learn about the life cycles of weeds, undesirable grasses and insects, we can control them better.

This book said all insects and weeds are not destroyers, but actually helpers in the garden. All types of insects and weeds, as well as diseases, are described and identified. An informed gardener is more aware of problems in the garden and is able to discuss controls with the professionals whose business it is to keep our lawns and gardens in tip-top

condition.

Keep in mind that it is easier to eliminate weeds on your property when they are small, said Leo Taylor of Michigan State University. Weed seedlings can be cut off with a hoe, while they are more difficult to control as they grow larger. Mulching

also helps control annual weeds.

Perennial weeds should be eliminated before the garden is planted by killing the underground parts usually with herbicides. Taylor said weeds shouldn't be allowed to mature and go to seed — that multiplies the problem.

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## Greenhouse folks meet

The Hobby Greenhouse Association will host a program on Matthaei Botanical Gardens at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Farmington Hills Public Library, 32737 W. 12

Mile, Farmington Hills.

The speaker will be Patricia Hopkinson of Ann Arbor. The meeting is free and open to non-members.

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