

Beat What's Pesteering Your Plants

Avoid the problem in the first place.

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University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

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At one time or another, we've all battled pests in our yards and gardens, from weeds and insects to plant diseases. Were the methods you used successful? Did they do the job safely without endangering you, your family, your pets or the environment? If not, it's time to use a new set of tools from your pest management toolbox.

In Nevada, many plant problems are caused by things we do that stress plants, such as improper watering, pruning, fertilizing or mowing, or putting the wrong plant in the wrong place. Pests usually take

advantage of these stressed plants. Focus on keeping plants healthy to prevent plant pests in the first place.

Use these tools to beat plant problems:

- ▶ Build up your soil. Good soil helps keep plants healthy and pest-resistant.
- ▶ Plant healthy, naturally pest-resistant plants that do well in your area.
- ▶ Choose a mix of plants and plant types for your garden.
- ▶ Leave room around plants for good air circulation.

Tips to protect your plants from pests:

- ▶ **Buy plants that will do well in your yard.** Don't fight Mother Nature! Learn the best growing conditions for your plants.
- ▶ **Get help figuring out your plant problem.** Bring samples to a University of Nevada Cooperative Extension office, or email good-quality photos for help figuring out the problem.
- ▶ **Don't get pests in the first place.** Stop pests from becoming a problem. Use clean fill dirt or topsoil, plant certified weed-free seed and buy high-quality, pest-free plants.
- ▶ **Give pests the right one-two punch.** Use more than one tactic to manage your pests.
- ▶ **Accept some pests.** The goal is to keep pest populations from getting too large. Focus on knocking back pests rather than getting rid of every one of them.



Tools from a safe pest management toolbox keep your landscape healthy and protect your family and pets.



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Clemson University Cooperative Extension, Bugwood.org

This beneficial ladybird beetle is eating pesky aphids.



W. Hanson Mazet, UNCE

Keep mulch several inches from the tree trunk to help keep pests away.



W. Hanson Mazet, UNCE

Never top a tree. Improper pruning stresses a plant and invites diseases, insect pests and other problems.

More tools to beat plant problems:

- ▶ Water the right amount for each plant.
- ▶ Keep beds and plants free from plant debris and weeds.
- ▶ Mulch to keep moisture in the ground and reduce weed problems.
- ▶ Keep plants healthy with properly timed pruning and fertilizing.

Some tools to manage pests:

- ▶ Pick insects off by hand.
- ▶ Knock off pests with a strong jet of water from your hose.
- ▶ Pull or hoe weeds.
- ▶ Place barriers, such as nets or row covers, around or over plants to protect them from pests.
- ▶ Use traps to capture insects, rodents and other pests.
- ▶ Apply repellents to discourage deer and other critters.
- ▶ Increase the number of good bugs in your yard—the beneficial insects that eat or prey on plant pests.

Using more than one tool is part of Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

To learn more about IPM, visit www.manageNVpests.info

Chemical control is the tool of last resort:

- ▶ Do some homework before you pick a product.
- ▶ Get advice from a trained professional.
- ▶ Use the least toxic method for the specific insect or pest.
- ▶ Read, understand and follow the label directions exactly.
- ▶ Apply chemicals when the pest is at a vulnerable stage of growth.
- ▶ Always wear the protective safety equipment listed on the product label.
- ▶ Never spray when it's windy or raining.
- ▶ Keep children, pets, toys and bowls out of the area while you spray and for as long afterward as the label requires.



M. Williamson, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

Use insecticides only when other methods don't work.

Contact University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE)



Washoe County/Reno: 775.784.4848

Douglas County: 775.782.9960

Carson City/Storey County: 775.887.2252

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