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Protecting Your Garden from Rabbits

Repellents

Rabbit browsing can be discouraged by repellents. Taste repellents, such as Rabbit Scat (ziram), make plants distasteful. Odor repellents, such as Hinder (ammonium soaps), drive rabbits away from treated areas by their strong odor. Unfortunately, repellents are not always effective. Rabbits may become accustomed to the disagreeable odor. Others may ignore the poor taste. In addition, most repellents must be reapplied after heavy rains.

Fencing

The most effective way to prevent rabbit damage in home gardens is to place chicken wire (the mesh should be 1-inch or smaller), 1/4-inch hardware cloth or other fencing materials around vulnerable plants. To provide adequate protection, the fence should be 1.5 to 2 feet tall. Support the fence with wooden stakes or metal posts. To keep rabbits from crawling underneath the fence, pin it tightly to the ground with u-shaped landscape pins or bury the bottom 1 to 2 inches below the ground.

In the home landscape, rabbit control is difficult. A combination of repellents, and fencing usually provide the best results. I have also found that since I have a large dog in my back yard I have no problems with rabbits.

White Grubs in the Lawn

We all worry about White Grubs destroying our lawns and we often put on grub killer the minute we see it in the store. That may not be the best time to treat the lawn as I see that it is on the store shelf already. However, the best time to treat for white grubs in our area is late July to early August. Avoiding unneeded insecticide use saves money and reduces the chance of pesticide exposure to people, pets, and wildlife. So always read the directions on the product you buy and follow them carefully.

It is possible to check for grubs by cutting a one-foot patch of sod on three sides and lift it up in several sections of the yard in late July and August. An average of five or more grubs per square foot is necessary to cause significant harm. After inspecting flaps of sod for grubs, tap them back in place and water well to reestablish. If you would like to learn more about White Grubs we have a flyer PM-1675 White Grubs in the lawn at the Extension office here in Cresco.

Clematis

What is your favorite climbing vine? When people ask me that question I say Clematis. This wonderful flowering vine will delight you with flowers from May to October. The trick to growing them is location and soil. Clematis thrives in rich, well-drained soil with at least 6 hours of sunlight each day and 1 inch of water per week. Once you pick the location you should prepare the soil by digging a good size hole and filling it with a mixture of soil and compost or peat. I have had success by blending both peat and compost in the hole with the soil. Plant the crown 1 to 2 inches below the soil surface. Water well and mulch 2-3 inches of wood chips. You will need to work with the vine to teach it where you wish it to grow. This is one of these plants that just get better as the years go on. The first two years they will be nice but not wonderful that usually come the third year and after.

The time to plant clematis is early in the spring in a well-drained sunny location where the roots are shaded and kept cool. Remember A layer of mulch around the plant is important to keep the soil moist and cool. The young shoots can be directed to grow up a trellis, or even on support posts of a deck or balcony.