

Lumps, bugs and slugs!

by Noni Young

Spring is only a month away and soon your garden will begin to show signs of life. Unfortunately, the warmer weather also brings pests and disease. This article looks at three very common garden nasties and provides steps to manage or eradicate them.

Lumps on my lemon tree

Citrus Gall Wasp is a small insect that appears in early spring. It lays its eggs in the soft new growth of citrus trees, especially lemons. As the eggs hatch and the lava grow, the tree reacts to this infestation and the result is a swelling on the stem which is called a gall. Galls can impact the health of a tree by limiting the flow of sap.



There are two simple steps to manage Citrus Gall Wasp and minimise damage.

1. Prune out any existing galls and dispose of the cuttings in the rubbish (not the compost). This should be done in winter before the larvae emerge as wasps.
2. Place a bright yellow sticky trap in the tree. This will attract the wasps before they can lay their eggs, thus breaking the cycle.

The leaves of my nectarine are bumpy and curly

Nectarines and peaches, are prone to leaf curl which is a fungal disease that emerges in late winter. The fungus attacks the newly forming leaves and results in stunted, deformed foliage that looks quite unsightly. The



disease can affect the overall vigour and fruiting capabilities of the tree.

Unfortunately, once you see the symptoms of leaf curl in spring it is too late. The time to act is as the leaf buds are forming in winter. Spray with a broad spectrum, low environmental impact fungicide such as copper oxychloride or copper hydroxide.

There are ugly black grubs on my weeping cherry

Pear and Cherry Slugs are the larvae of the Black Sawfly and appear in late spring.



They feed voraciously on the leaves of both the fruiting and ornamental forms of pears, cherries, plums, apples and crab apples. The damaged leaves appear skeletonised and unsightly. Trees with significant damage to their foliage will have poor vigour, reduced fruiting and become susceptible to other pests and diseases.

The larvae pupate in the soil and then move up into the tree via the stem. Applying wood ash from the fireplace at the base of the tree in winter and placing a sticky barrier tape around the tree's stem will limit infestation. For those grubs that do make it to the leaves, they can be physically removed by hand or by using a strong jet of water from the hose.

Happy gardening!

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