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Rhododendron: Root weevils

Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for successful plant problem management.

Biology

Several species of weevils feed on rhododendrons. Characteristic damage includes notching of leaf edges by adults and minor to severe root and bark damage by larvae. Occasionally the larvae girdle the trunk at or just below the soil surface, killing the plant. Adults are wingless and begin feeding around June to August, depending on the species.

Management Options

Non-Chemical Management

- ~ Plant resistant types of rhododendrons. Your county extension agent or WSU Master Gardeners can furnish a list.
- ~ Application of beneficial nematodes which kill the larvae. They are used as a soil drench in moist soils over 52 degrees F (late summer to early fall in western Washington).

Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!

Chemical Management

IMPORTANT: Visit Home and Garden Fact Sheets for more information on using pesticides

Adult control should begin when adults emerge late May-June or when first signs of notching appear on new leaves. A follow-up application may be necessary about a month later. Beneficial nematodes can be ordered from certain nurseries. They can be applied to control the larval stage if soil temperatures are warmer than 52 F. Do not apply nematodes in direct sunlight and be certain soil is saturated with water before application. Homeowners should not make foliar applications to trees over 10 ft tall. Consult a commercial pesticide applicator for treatment of trees and shrubs over 10 ft. tall.

Listed below are examples of pesticides that are legal in Washington. Always read and follow all label directions.

- ~ Safer Brand BioNEEM Multi-Purpose Insecticide & Repellent Conc [Organic]
 - active ingredient: azadirachtin
 - EPA reg no: 70051-6-42697
- ~ Safer Brand Garden Defense Multi-Purpose Spray Conc [Organic]
 - active ingredient: clarified hydrophobic extract of neem oil
 - EPA reg no: 70051-2-42697
- ~ This list may not include all products registered for this use.

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Images



~ Caption: Root weevil damage on rhododendron
~ Photo by: A.L. Antonelli



~ Caption: Root weevil larval damage
~ Photo by: A.L. Antonelli



~ Caption: Adult root weevil damage
~ Photo by: E.P. Breakey



~ *Caption: Root weevil larvae*
~ *Photo by: A.L. Antonelli*