

Dear Dr. Atkins.

I am unsure of the best time to spray insects. I don't like to spray needlessly but, if I wait too long, my plants will be domaged.

Perplexed

Dear Perplexed: You are correct in wanting to avoid needless insecticide applications. Keep a close watch on your garden for signs of insect activity and damage.

Also, use insect traps as an early afert system to monitor pest activity; when the traps are attracting insects, it's time to examine your garden and treat infested plants.

If you use a natural pesticide such as insecticidal soap, you can treat your fruits and vegetables up to the day of harvest.

Dear Dr. Atkins:

I have noticed that some of my ornamental plants have dark patches on their foliage. What is this and will it harm the plant?

Dear Worried:

From your description, this sounds like a type of fungus. Every year, common fungal diseases such as powdery mildew and black spot attack and destroy countless food crops and ornamental plants.

Fortunately, you can control these and other fungal pests by using a fungicide containing sulfur.

In the past, most sulfur-based fungi-

cides were formulated as dusts. Today, however, you can buy sulfur fungicide in a convenient, ready-to-use spray. This type of product is manufactured by Safer, and is available where you huy your lawn and garden supplies.

Dear Dr. Aikins:

We grow our own tomatoes because we like knowing they are free from taxic substances, but last year our garden was attacked by caterpillars which caused severe damage. Is there any safe way to protect our tomatoes and other vegetables from these hungry guests?

Dear Pestered:

If you see the worms at work, pick them off the plants. Also, you can use caterpillar killer containing B.t. or Bacillus thuringiensis.

Pestered

B.t. is a natural microbial insecticide that controls caterpillars, but will not harm people, pets or the environment. After the caterpillar ingests the B.t., it will stop feeding, and death will occur within a couple of days.

Don't be concerned if the caterpillars don't die immediately; they are no longer, feeding and the natural insecticide is at work on their internal organs. Most retailers carry B.t. caterpillar killer.

Dr. Atkins is nationally recognized for his work in ecological insect management. For the past 17 years he has laught entomology at San Diego State University. [17]

Get all the facts first

Before you start re-wiring the new basement family room, or changing the plumbing in the bathroom, read up on the information available from the Ontario Ministry of

They've put together fact sheets and booklets on a variety of home renovation topics. Some titles include: The Water Resistant House; Understanding Your House; Plans, Permits & Payments; Get Your House In Shape; and Wiring: Putting Power at Your Fingertips.

The pamphlets give the basics on how different systems work, the looks needed to make repairs, permit and

inspection requirements and renovation tips.

They are available free from the: Housing Conservation Unit, Ministry of Housing, 777 Bay Street, 2nd floor, Toronto, Ontario MsG 2E5, or call (416) \$85-6514 or the Ontario Renovation Information Centre, 16 Howland Road, Toronto, Ontario M4K 2Z6, or call (416) 461-7577.

Available from the Ontario Government Bookstore is The Plumbing Code. Call 965-6015 in Toronto, or toll-free at 1-800-268-7540.

Your local Ontario Hydro Office can also provide you with booklets such as the Vacation Home Electrical Inspection Guide, and Electrical Salety Code for Council.



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