

“Ask The Plant Groom”™ by Dale Groom, The Plant Groom™

For: QA1028

I have problems with worms in my pecan tree and need to know how to get rid of them. - W.T.

“Worms” in pecan trees are successfully controlled with a biological product containing BT. This active ingredient should be available in many product lines at local retail nurseries as well as other retailers.

Important notes regarding “worm” or caterpillar control in trees:

- Pecan and similar height trees are usually beyond the reach of homeowner’s sprayers. Options? Apply insect control and disease prevention aids at the maximum heights your sprayer will reach. Hire a commercial applicator with equipment capable of reaching target trees’ maximum heights. Do nothing. The decision is yours.
- Eastern tent caterpillars and fall web worms homes’ or webs are often compared to protection similar to a tent we may utilize for weather protection when camping out. For this reason it’s important that webs be physically disturbed to allow penetration of selected active ingredient.
- Always read and follow label directions when applying any garden aid.
- An option some homeowners utilize is physically removing entire webs by pruning.

NOTE: To secure a free Home Owner’s Fruit and Nut Spray Schedule send your request and include a self addressed and stamped long envelope to Dale Groom, 10056 Marsh Lane, Suite B-101, Dallas, TX 75229. This schedule covers pecans, peaches and plums.

How often should crape myrtles be watered? - F. W.

Crape myrtles are one of our most drought tolerant shrubs after establishment. We see these puppies growing in the median of IH-35 with no supplemental irrigation. And it doesn’t get much hotter and drier than this or similar locations in Texas.

Only water established crape myrtles when they need a drink. In heavy soils they are relatively easily over watered. When the edges of crape myrtles begin to curl or the beginning signs of wilting are noted give your plants a slow soaking. It is much better to water only when needed and not by a preset schedule.

Crape myrtles are Water Wise landscape plants. Let's plant more of them!!

Remember: Never, ever for any reason cut back crape myrtles. This butchering activity ruins their natural shape. If short plants are needed, install low growing varieties. DO NOT plant tall growing varieties and "whack" or cut them back.

How is the best way to start ivy? - D. K.

There are various kinds of "ivies". Some of these ivies are pothos, philodendrons or hedra helix. Pothos is the most common ivy we grow in our homes and one common name is devil's ivy. The trailing philodendron often grown indoors in Texas is *Philodendron cordatum* or heart leaf. Hedra helix is most often known as English ivy.

There are several varieties of vine or trailing plants in each of these three groups and all are successfully propagated by cuttings. Select healthy non-woody stems and make the initial cut approximately 4" below the runner's tip at a 45-degree angle just below where a leaf is attached. Remove the bottom leaf; insert the cut end into a powdered rooting hormone and place into a container previously filled with lightweight potting soil.

Do not root cuttings in water or garden soil. Holes may be made in the potting soil with a pencil. Insert your selected cuttings approximately 2" deep and firm the soil around each cutting. You may completely fill a container with cuttings if multiple plants are desired.

Keep the soil moist and this time of the year you should have rooted cuttings in approximately 6-8 weeks ready to transplant.

This is fun stuff to do. If you have any children let them join you in this activity. After the cuttings are rooted also let them pot up several of their "own" cuttings and teach them how to care for the plant long term. This is a very positive family activity.

Dale Groom, Extension Horticulturist, Dallas County, Texas Cooperative Extension, Author, Columnist, Radio/TV Host is also known state wide as The Plant Groom™. You may send your lawn, garden and landscape questions to Dale at dalegroom@mycvc.net

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