



## Weevils on your Rhodo's

Well if last season was any indication we are rapidly nearing one of the worst years ever for Black Vine Weevil. Record numbers appeared across the lower Mainland of BC and Vancouver Island.

Often going unnoticed, the juvenile of the black vine weevils spends the majority of its life feeding underground on the tender root hairs of our beloved Rhododendrons, Hydrangea, Primula and Azaleas. It is only during the summer months after the beetles emerge, are we aware that we have a problem. These adults are responsible for the unsightly notching chewed into the leaves. In years past we have tried to combat these destructive pests when they are in their most formidable stage, as adults.

As with most creatures these insects are most susceptible as juveniles, in their grub stage. It is virtually impossible to reach these grubs under the soil unless one uses beneficial nematodes to seek out the pest.

Nematodes should be applied when the grubs are in the soil between March – June and August – Oct.. The beneficial nematodes need a host, like the weevil grub to reproduce and prosper. They enter the pest through the anus or mouth and promptly release a bacterium to initiate decay. The adult nematode then lays eggs and the emerging nematodes feed on the decaying pest. It doesn't take long before the one application of 5 million you applied turns into 500 000 000. That is a pretty good return on investment if you ask me.

## Finally spring has arrived to The Bug Lady's garden. Hooray!

The tree frogs were about 21 days late to our pond but they are finally here in full song. Today my first daffodil opened and

the forsythia is in bloom. Finally we can shed the cold and darkness of the dull winter and rejoice in the colour of our gardens. It takes only a few warm days and already I can see the flower buds of the hyacinth and the lovage leaves poking their noses out. Even the salamanders have been active leaving a few clutches of eggs in my pond. The birds too have been going crazy over my recently turned veggie beds. There is an abundance of cutworm keeping their bellies full. MMMMM.

## What's your plan?

Okay, let's not go through the same problems as we did last year. Let's put that mass we call our brains to work and put into action what we learned last year.

Refer to your garden log or reach back through the xmas parties and kids going back to school to the time when are gardens bloomed. What did you see?.. Did you have pest problems or was everything flourishing? Let's get ahead of the pests this year by addressing what we encountered last year.

**Rhododendrons** – Great until about midsummer then all of the leaves became chewed.

**Answer** – Apply nematodes this spring to kill the over wintering juveniles of this pest to prevent the damage again this summer.

**My plum tree** was infested with aphids last summer

**Answer** – Choose nectar and pollen rich plants to surround the frequently infested plants. These flowers will support early arriving predators of aphids.

Release ladybugs as soon as aphids appear on the trees.

**My compost** looks the same as when I last put my grass clippings in this past fall.

**Answer** - Compost needs to be turned fairly regularly to get the beneficial organisms to work. Turn your compost and add a batch of worms to get it into gear.

**My Gladiola's** come up very well and just when I think I will have they are the most perfect on the street they start to discolour and weaken



**Answer**- Gladiolas and onions can be plagued by a common insect called thrips. These pests feed on the flowers and foliage of the plants causing a striping effect or fruit /flower distortion. Early this summer apply the predatory mites *A. cucumeris* sold as **No Thrips™** in our products section of the website.

**My seedlings** were devoured by sow bugs.

**Answer** - Take a small empty margarine container and cut a small hole at the base. Add 1 TBSP cornmeal to the container, cover with lid and place next to the seeding trays. The sow bugs enter,



feed, drink and expand.....to death.

## Upcoming Events

**April 4 2006** Nanaimo Dahlia Club  
7:30 Malaspina campus

**April 10 2006** Medicine Hat Horticultural Society - Bug Workshop

**April 12 2006** Calgary Horticultural Society Bug Workshop

**April 22 2006** Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society plant sale

**April 22 -23 2006** Milner Garden Plant Sale

**April 29 2006** Dinter Nursery Bug workshop

[bugme@thebuglady.ca](mailto:bugme@thebuglady.ca)

(250)951-1973