L.S. PERENNIAL LANDSCAPES

"Quality That Grows On"

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INSECT CONTROL FOR PERENNIALS & SHRUBS — A Customer Guide

Healthy landscapes start with early detection and smart treatment. This guide covers the most common insect pests found on perennials and shrubs in our region, along with proven natural and chemical control methods.

Common Insect Pests

Aphids — Tiny, soft-bodied, pear-shaped insects found in clusters on new growth, buds, and undersides of leaves. Common types include green peach aphids (light green, found on many perennials), rose aphids (green or pink, target roses), and woolly aphids (white, cotton-like coating on stems). They suck plant sap, causing curled or yellowed leaves, sticky honeydew residue, and sooty mold.

Red Lily Leaf Beetle — Brilliant scarlet-red beetles (¼–½ inch) with black head and legs. Adults and larvae devour leaves, buds, and flowers of true lilies (Asiatic, Oriental, Martagon) and Fritillaria — does NOT affect daylilies. Larvae disguise themselves under dark, slimy excrement on foliage.

Japanese Beetles — Metallic green beetles with copper-brown wings, about ½ inch long. Feed on over 300 plant species including roses, hydrangeas, cannas, and lindens. They skeletonize leaves by eating tissue between the veins, creating a lace-like appearance. Most active June through August.

Spider Mites — Nearly invisible to the naked eye; look for fine webbing on leaf undersides, stippled or bronzed foliage, and leaf drop. Thrive in hot, dry conditions. Common on shrubs, perennials, and evergreens. A simple test: hold white paper under a branch and tap — tiny moving specks confirm mites.

Scale Insects — Small, immobile bumps on stems and leaf undersides. Soft scale types produce honeydew and sooty mold; armored scale types appear as hard, shell-like bumps. Common on shrubs like euonymus, holly, and hydrangea. Heavy infestations cause yellowing, branch dieback, and overall decline.

Caterpillars & Sawfly Larvae — Various worm-like larvae that chew holes in leaves or strip foliage entirely. Common culprits include rose sawfly (green larvae that skeletonize rose leaves), bagworms (on evergreen shrubs), and various caterpillars on perennials. Look for chewed leaves, droppings (frass), and rolled or webbed leaves.

Natural Controls (First Line of Defense)

Start with these proven natural methods. They are safe for pollinators and beneficial insects when applied correctly.

Hand Removal — The simplest starting point for visible pests like beetles, caterpillars, and egg clusters.

Directions: Inspect plants regularly, focusing on undersides of leaves and new growth. Pick off insects and drop into a container of soapy water. Crush egg clusters on sight. Best done in early morning when pests are sluggish. Repeat every few days during active season.

Neem Oil — A botanical insecticide from the neem tree. Disrupts feeding and growth of soft-bodied insects; repels beetles. Effective against aphids, mites, scale crawlers, and beetle larvae.

Directions: Mix 2 tablespoons of cold-pressed neem oil and 1 teaspoon of liquid dish soap per gallon of water. Spray thoroughly on tops and undersides of all leaves. Apply in early morning or evening to avoid leaf burn. Reapply every 7 days and after rain.

Spinosad — An organic insecticide derived from soil bacteria. Kills on contact. Effective against beetles, caterpillars, sawfly larvae, and thrips.

Directions: Mix according to product label (typically 2–4 tablespoons per gallon of water). Spray directly onto foliage, covering all leaf surfaces. Apply in early morning or evening to protect pollinators. Reapply every 7–10 days or after heavy rain.

Diatomaceous Earth (DE) — A natural powder made from fossilized organisms. Works by abrading insect exoskeletons, causing dehydration. Effective against beetles, crawling insects, and slugs.

Directions: Use food-grade DE only. Dust a light, visible layer on and around foliage, focusing on leaf surfaces and soil base around stems. Reapply after rain or heavy watering, as DE loses effectiveness when wet. Wear a dust mask during application.

Baking Soda Spray — A household remedy effective against soft-bodied pests like aphids and whiteflies, and helpful for fungal issues. Best used as a supplemental treatment alongside other methods.

Directions: Mix 1 tablespoon of baking soda and 1 teaspoon of liquid dish soap per gallon of water. Spray on foliage, covering tops and undersides of leaves. Apply in early morning or evening. Reapply weekly and after rain. Note: Most effective as a companion treatment — not a standalone solution for heavy infestations.

Chemical Options (For Severe Outbreaks)

When natural methods are not enough to control a heavy infestation, the following chemical products are effective options. Always read and follow label directions.

- **BioAdvanced Rose & Flower Care** — Systemic granular treatment applied to soil; provides inside-out protection against a wide range of chewing and sucking insects
- **Bonide Systemic Insect Control** — Systemic granular option providing extended protection for perennials and shrubs
- **Sevin (Carbaryl)** — Contact insecticide; spray directly on insects for quick knockdown of beetles, caterpillars, and other pests
- **Ortho BugClear** — Contact and residual spray for broad-spectrum insect control on ornamentals
- **Bonide Eight (Permethrin)** — Contact spray effective against a wide range of garden insects; reapply as directed

Tips for Prevention

- Inspect plants weekly during growing season — early detection is key
- Encourage beneficial insects (ladybugs, lacewings, parasitic wasps) by avoiding broad-spectrum sprays when possible
- Keep garden beds clean of debris where pests overwinter
- Water at the base of plants to reduce conditions that attract spider mites and fungal issues

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Questions? Contact L.S. PERENNIAL LANDSCAPES — We're here to help protect your landscape.