



# EASTERN IDAHO

# PEST ALERT

BANNOCK, BINGHAM, BONNEVILLE, CASSIA, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, AND MADISON COUNTIES

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# Thatch in the Lawn

By Ron Patterson, Extension Educator

Thatch. Thatch is a tightly interwoven layer of living and dead tissue between the green vegetation and the soil surface. A little bit of thatch is the sign of a healthy, growing lawn. A healthy thatch layer will improve turfgrass wear tolerance, increase drought tolerance, and provide habitat for beneficial organisms. If the thatch layer is more than ½ inch, it can become a problem, harboring disease organisms and insect pests, and decrease drought tolerance.

Thatch can build up when grass is growing vigorously or when excessive nitrogen is applied, especially in the spring. Compacted soil with shallow root development can also contribute to thatch development. Lawns that are kept too wet will decrease microorganism activity that break thatch down. Insecticides and fungicides will reduce beneficial insect and microorganism presence and activity.

The easiest way to check the lawn thatch level is to cut out a 1 x 2 wedge about two inches deep and measure the brown, fibrous layer between the soil and green vegetation.

I have seen very few lawns in eastern Idaho that have too much thatch, but they do exist. There are two approaches to dealing with thatch—prevention and removal.

**Prevention** involves cultural practices that encourage a healthy lawn.

Mow every three to four days when the grass is growing fast, especially in the spring and fall. During hot summer months and as we near fall dormancy, time between mowings can be increased to about a week.

Mulching the lawn clippings back onto the lawn does not contribute to thatch buildup.

Mow at the proper height. Do not cut the grass any shorter than 2.5 inches and mow when



no more than 1/3 of the blade will be removed.

Fertilize in small increments, about four times during the season. Do not apply more than one pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet each time you fertilize.

Irrigate deep and infrequently. This is an entire discussion for a different day, but daily, shallow irrigations are not good for the lawn. A lawn with healthy roots should go 5 – 7 days between irrigations—sandy soils maybe 3 – 4 days.

**Removal** is done by aeration or power raking. While power raking does remove thatch, it won't address any underlying issues such as soil compaction. Power raking will also do a significant amount of damage to the crown and blades of the grass. Aeration is a better option in most situations. It is important to use the type of aerator that pulls a plug out of the soil and leaves it on top. You can rake those up or just leave them on the surface to break down and incorporate back into the soil.

Note that worms and nightcrawlers accomplish the same action as an aerator. Aerating an entire lawn is usually not necessary, especially if thatch is not a problem in your lawn. Compacted soil in pathways caused by people or pets may need to be aerated even if there isn't excessive thatch.

Employ healthy lawncare practices to avoid thatch buildup, but don't waste your money on practices if they are not needed.

# Companion Planting

We've had several requests to discuss companion planting. Companion planting is the ideas that some plants do better when planted together with each other for a myriad of reasons. Also, there are some plants that don't do well when planted together.

For more information on companion planting, see these resources:

[Companion Planting in Small Gardens, UMN](#)

[Companion Planting in the Vegetable Garden, UMASS](#)

[Companion Planting, WVU](#)

Also see the chart below from West Virginia Extension that shows what plants do well together and which ones don't.

Plant	Companions	Do NOT plant next to
Asparagus	Tomato, basil, parsley	
Beans	Most vegetables and herbs	Onion, garlic, gladiolus
Cabbage family (Cauliflower, kale, broccoli)	Sage, dill, beets, peppermint, rosemary, corn, onion family, chard, spinach, sunflowers, nasturtiums	Dill, fennel, strawberries, pole beans, tomatoes
Cantaloupe	Corn, sunflowers	Potatoes
Celery	Onion and cabbage families, tomatoes, bush beans, nasturtiums	
Corn	Irish potatoes, beans, English peas, pumpkins, cucumber, squash	Tomatoes
Cucumber	Beans, corn, English peas, sunflowers, radishes, cabbage family	Irish potatoes, aromatic herbs
Eggplant	Beans, marigolds	Potatoes
Lettuce	Carrot, radish, strawberries, cucumber, onions	
Onion family	Beets, carrot, lettuce, cabbage family, tomatoes, strawberries, Summer Savory tomato, asparagus	Beans, English peas
Potato, Irish	Beans, corn, cabbage family, marigolds, horseradish, peas	Pumpkin, squash, tomatoes, cucumber, sunflowers, raspberries
Spinach	Strawberries	
Squash	Nasturtium, corn, radishes, marigolds	
Strawberries	Bush beans, spinach, borage, lettuce (as a boarder)	Cabbage
Tomato	Herbs, such as parsley, dill, and basil	Irish potatoes, fennel, cabbage

# Codling Moth:

## Conventional production options

- *High fruit damage* in past years:
  - Apply the first application for either Option A (insecticide) or Option B (oil) at the listed date.
  - For Option A, repeat the insecticide spray 14 days later, for a total of 2 applications in the first generation.
  - For Option B, apply the insecticide spray at the listed date once.
  - When the “start date” for the 2nd generation is provided, spray every 10-18 days until Sept. 15.
  - Pick a different product to use for each generation.
- *Low fruit damage* in past years:
  - Apply the first application for either Option A (insecticide) or Option B (oil) at the listed date.
  - For Option A, do not spray again.
  - For Option B, apply insecticide at the listed date.
  - Wait until the “start date” for the 2nd generation is provided, and spray on that date, and repeat 14 days later, for a total of 2 sprays.
  - Do the same for the 3rd generation.

Pick a different product to use for each generation.

## Organic production options (other than bagging)

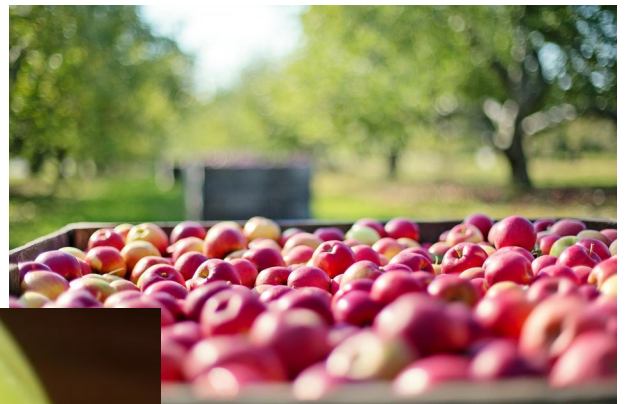
- *High fruit damage* in past years:
  - Apply the first application for either Option A (insecticide) or Option B (oil).
  - For Option A, repeat twice, spaced 7-10 apart, for a total of 3 applications in the first generation.



Scott Bauer, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Bugwood.org



Second Generation				
Location	Start of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation hatch	Start of Peak Egg Hatch 2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation	End of Peak Hatch 2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation	End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation
Burley	July 30	unknown	unknown	unknown
Pocatello Airport	July 30	unknown	unknown	unknown
Pocatello East Side	July 22	August 2	unknown	unknown
Fort Hall	August 3	unknown	unknown	unknown
Blackfoot	August 9	unknown	unknown	unknown
South/East Idaho Falls	August 5	unknown	unknown	unknown
Idaho Falls Airport	August 4	unknown	unknown	unknown
Ucon	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown
Rigby	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown
Ririe	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown
Rexburg	August 8	unknown	unknown	unknown
Sugar City	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown
St Anthony	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown
Driggs	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown



Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

Ingredient	Efficacy	Residual length (days)	Comments
<b>Conventional</b>			
Carbaryl (old Sevin products)	Good	14	
Gamma-cyhalothrin (Spectracide Triazicide)	Good to Excellent	14 – 17	Last application at least 21 days prior to harvest
Malathion (Bonide Malathion, Hi Yield Malathion)	Good	5 – 7	Max 2 applications; some products are pears only
Zeta cypermethrin (Garden Tech Sevin)	Good to Excellent	14 – 17	Last application at least 14 days prior to harvest
<b>Organic</b>			
Azadirachtin (Safer BioNeem)	Fair to Good	7 – 10	
Codling moth virus (Cyd-X)	Good (if populations low)	7	Works best when used at beginning of generation
Kaolin clay (Surround)	Fair	7	Produces protective barrier
Oil (All Seasons Oil, EcoSmart, Neem)	Fair	3	Recommended for the first application of the generation only
Pyrethrin (Ortho Fruit Spray, Fertilome Fruit Tree Spray, Safer End All)	Good	3 – 5	
Spinosad Monterey/ Fertilome Spinosad	Good	7 – 10	Max 6 applications



## Fire Blight

At this point, prune out any new fire blight strikes as they happen. Don't wait until the end of the season or winter/spring pruning. Remember to disinfect your tools between each cut.

## EASTERN IDAHO

## PEST ALERT

## UPCOMING EVENTS

## JULY 12 IDAHO HOME GARDEN TIPS

## INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

KIMBERLY TATE, EXTENSION EDUCATOR

July 12 | 7:00pm MT

Join us for a class all about choosing the best methods for controlling pests and diseases in the home landscape. IPM focuses on using the most effective and least damaging techniques first. Learn where you can find these techniques.

## JULY 26 IDAHO HOME GARDEN TIPS

## HARVESTING VEGETABLES

## PLANT TALK

## AUGUST 9 NO GARDEN TIPS CLASS!!

## AUGUST 8-12 BONNEVILLE COUNTY FAIR

## AUGUST 23 IDAHO HOME GARDEN TIPS

## CONSERVING WATER IN THE LANDSCAPE

## SEPTEMBER 13 TENDER SUMMER BULBS

## PHOTO OF THE WEEK:

Photo credit:  
Markus Spiske

## PHOTO OF THE WEEK:

This fun picture is also a good reminder of how important water is in the garden. But we'd also like to stress the importance of not using TOO MUCH WATER in your garden!! We have had MANY overwatering related diseases and plant problems in our clinic the last few weeks. The real clincher is that a plant that is being over-watered will act the SAME as a plant that is thirsty... so a good rule of thumb is to use your thumb! Or another finger to stick in the soil and make sure it's drying before watering. You can also poke a long screwdriver in the ground-if it goes in easily, you don't need water yet!

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