**Q&A**

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Q: My yard is overrun with hackberry seedlings. I cut them down three times a year but they all resprout and new ones grow. Is there a solution?

A: There is no way to eliminate all hackberry seedlings but you can kill the ones you cut by applying a drop of Vine and Stump Killer on the fresh cut. The active ingredient translocates to the roots and kills the whole plant.

Q: Tell us again what the black specks are on the citrus fruits. My mother does not believe they are caused by grackles. She thinks they are some disease. They are also okay to eat, aren’t they?

A: I hate to disagree with anybody’s mother, but, yes, the black specks are pecks made by young grackles on the young fruit. It is a relatively new phenomenon and we don’t know why they do it yet, but it is done by grackles. The fruit can be eaten; the pecks are usually just a cosmetic blemish.

Q: You and Dr. Parsons were “arguing” about whether Ornamec, Over the Top, Vantage and Grass be Gone would kill annual rye grass and rescue grass on your KLUP radio show. Did you ever resolve the argument?

A: Yes, we have concluded that the contact herbicides work on the winter grass weeds but that action can be very slow in cool and overcast weather. The herbicide is taken in the by the grass best when it is lush and growing and also warm and sunny. We have lush grassy weeds but we haven’t had much sun or warmth. It will take several sprays and three to four weeks for a kill in this weather.

Q: How long should it take for my leaves to decompose on the lawn? I am trying to convince my dad that it is environmentally the best strategy. He wants me to rake them and bag the leaves for the landfill.

A: If I have a vote, I vote with you. Leaves that are allowed to decompose on the lawn return nutrients and organic material back to the soil. It depends on the weather how fast they will decompose. If it stays cold, it will be a month. To speed up the process run the mower over the leaves. The smaller the pieces, the quicker they decompose.