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**“Aphids Q&A”**

Q. We have aphids and ladybug larvae on the new growth on our gaur and other plants in the landscape. Should we kill the aphids? Is there an insecticide that will kill the aphids without hurting the ladybugs?

A. This is a common dilemma. How much damage from pests can we tolerate without a pesticide? In the situation you describe, you and the environment probably do best by leaving the aphids to the attention of the ladybugs. They won’t wipe out the population but should reasonably control it. Gaur, like most ornamentals, are tough enough to tolerate an aphid infestation.

Q. I don’t understand what is happening on my lawn. It was green and lush, but now it is fading and the plants are losing their lushness. We fertilized last week. It has rained, but the decline hasn’t stopped. What is happening, and what can we do?

A. It sounds to me like the lush lawn you had this winter was from rescue grass or one of the other winter annual grasses. Now, it is declining because of the warm weather. Your regular lawn grass should be emerging to replace the rescue grass. If I am right, the pattern will repeat itself again next year. If you want to prevent the rescue grass from taking over the winter lawn, mark your calendar to apply Amaze or XL on Sept. 1 next year.

Q. Our garden nursery has large tomato specimens in 1-gallon containers. Is it too late to plant them in the garden?

A. No, they will do great if they are one of the recommended varieties — Solar Fire, Sunmaster, 444, Phoenix, Tycoon, Tygress, ValleyCat, Bobcat, BHN 968 or other determinate and semi-determinate selections.

Q. There are red blotches on our snapdragons, and the leaves are turning yellow. Is there something I can treat them with?

A. The problem sounds like rust, a fungal disease. It is difficult to treat once the warm days begin. The best strategy is to pull the infected plants and replace them with zinnias, vinca and penta or some other summer annual.

For questions about horticulture, water conservation and the environment, email Calvin Finch at Calvin.finch@tamu.edu.