

Persistent Problems with Selected Landscape Plants  
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Summer has arrived and some persistent problems have appeared or reappeared in the home landscape. Based on the number of telephone calls and office visits to the Sumner County Extension office, rose rosette disease, rose slugs, and the decline and death of Leyland Cypress trees are the current issues.

Rose rosette disease continues to be rampant, especially affecting Knockout roses. Most homeowners indicate that they first noticed some strange growth on their roses last year. The abnormal growth indicates that the rose plant has been infected by rose rosette virus transmitted by a mite. The virus travels down the cane toward the base of the plant, eventually reaching the root system and affecting the entire plant. There is no treatment or cure for the disease. Infected plants should be removed and destroyed. It is recommended that roses not be replanted in the same location for at least two years.

Many homeowners with healthy roses have noticed holes in the leaves of their plants. While the first thought of the cause might be a disease, the holes are being caused from the feeding of rose slugs. The caterpillar-like larvae are very small and can usually be found on the undersides of the leaves. Insecticidal soap and horticultural oil are effective in controlling this pest. Both of these pesticides must come in contact with the pest, so thorough coverage of upper and lower leaf surfaces is a must.

Leyland Cypress trees are exhibiting the effects of a harsh winter and the attack of mites. The extended periods of sub-freezing temperatures caused some dieback to occur in last year's new shoots. Rainfall was plentiful most of last year and the resulting new growth did not have an opportunity to harden off prior to the onset of winter. I have observed mite presence and evidence of mites on the branches of Leyland Cypress as well. The mites pierce the foliage and feed on the sap of the trees. The feeding increases the stress on the trees and also increases their decline. Insecticidal soap and horticultural oil are effective in controlling the mites. Treatments should be distributed over as much of the foliage as possible and repeated seven days after the first treatment.