

Notes from October 28, 2017, Pruning Demo for LHNPC

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Pest Control

Argentine Ants- Effective baits and stations

Gourmet Ant Bait with the green mushroom stations.

Need to dilute bait at least 1 or 2 to 1 distilled water to bait to reduce boric acid levels to percentage that will eliminate the colony and not just kill the workers. Do not use tap water as chlorine repels the ants. Cover stations with old 5 gallon plant pots to shade the stations.

Advion Ant Bait (both bulk and gel) and small puck-shaped stations. (bait includes both protein and sugar)

Approximate prices ~\$30/ bag of bait; ~\$1/ station

May attract slugs (see below for slug control)

Tim-bor Professional insecticide and fungicide. Moosa Creek Nursery uses a mixture of Tim-bor and a pre-packaged sugar mixture (KM Ant Pro, POBox 697, Nokomis, FL 34274) to make ant bait. Much less expensive than Gourmet (used at 4 oz Tim-bor/5 gallon water ratio).

-Heavy infestations

Pyrethrum based treatments used to destroy heavy infestations.

Bayer Complete Insect Killer should only be used out of pollinator seasons as the systemic aspect of it can harm

beneficial pollinators. Spray plant and soak the root area and soil around the root ball.

-Treatment season

Be sure to treat aggressively during late winter/early spring (Jan thru Mar) as that is when colonies bulk up to start new nests and colonies.

-Slug concerns

Deadline can be used effectively to prevent slugs from consuming the Advion bait.

An iron oxide mixture (Ferric sodium EDTA) is also very effective for slug control and appears to have no harmful effects on mammals.

Grasses – Grass Begone spray kills grasses and has no effect on broad-leaf plants

Pruning Natives

Evergreens usually don't need much pruning; just trim for shape and to remove dead parts.

Important tools: bypass pruners and long-handled shears.

Tools should be treated with disinfectant often (after every ten minutes, after cutting a diseased stem, or before starting a new species during pruning.

10% bleach solution

Quaternary ammonia solution

Hydrogen peroxide solution

Paint Pruning Seal on any branches cut greater than ½" in diameter.

Specific plant guidance:

California fuchsia – can bloom till December; spreads by rhizomes and seeds; can be cut back to ground or ~1” stems to re-grow. Can be pruned either of two times in the year, or both: after blooming (~Jan) and in June to force healthy growth prior to next bloom.

Thorn Bush – shape it, cut off dead branches; woody plant can be cut back up to about 1/3 of the above ground mass.

Apache plume – fairly evergreen; dead-head it, cutting off the spent seed pods; shape it (tip pruning)

Red bud – limb it when fully dormant; dead limbs can be removed at any time.

Sage – prune it in January at the bottom of the flower stems; cut back to good, green growth only.

Seaside daisy – cut off at base of the flower stems as the entire branch for the flower will dry out and die after blooming; do not just dead-head the spent flowers. Proper pruning will encourage spreading base growth.

Yarrow – same as Seaside daisy; cut dry stems off at base.

Penstemons – classic dead-heading is helpful; can leave seeds as mulch or for reseeding; leave about 12” stems. Can pull stems through fingers to remove dry leaves and seed pods.

Galvezia – prune tips after blooming

Artemisia – shear for shaping and remove dead branches

Verbena – prune like a sage

Carpentaria – prune tips after blooming

Deer grass – shave grass off to the base in January; leave at most about 1”; or burn off grasses leaving only the base (be very careful to have adequate water around for this approach).

Baccharis – spreading varieties can be cut back to about an 18” diameter center half ball as it is a stump sprouter and will regrow well from that.

Encelia – prune branches back to about 18” after blooming

Mallows – prune like sages, up to about ½ the above ground mass

Matilija poppy – cut back to about 6” stems

Mimulus – less aggressive pruning required; leave at least 18 – 24” stems; can clean stems similarly to that shown for penstemons

Large shrubs/trees (Toyon, Sumac, Oaks) - prune to shape and remove diseased or dead limbs

An incredible morning with a fantastic amount of information and help from two terrific guides, thank you, Hank and Greg.