



Extension Notes

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HORTICULTURE

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Rose Slugs

Several species of slug sawflies injure rose leaves. Their slug-like bodies and feeding styles produce characteristic window-pane damage on leaves. These wasp larvae usually feed from the underside of the leaf, leaving a thin layer of pale green epidermis (Figure 1).

Feeding sites soon dry and disappear so only irregular holes remain. Damage can be extensive. The bristly rose slug caterpillar is the most nefarious of the group because it has multiple generations during the summer; other species that attack roses have only one or two generations.

Management – Check upper and lower leaf surfaces of rose foliage regularly to detect infestations as they begin. Egg laying and hatch continues over an extended period, so damage control is not limited to a week or two in early spring.

Options include:

- Remove infested leaves.
- Knock small larvae off of plants with a strong stream of water
- Crush small larvae as they are found.
- Check the label of insecticides registered for pests of roses and other flowers to see if sawflies are listed. Read and follow instructions to protect pollinators.

Be aware that Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) products DO NOT work on this pest since it is the larva of a sawfly rather than a caterpillar.

For more information, contact the Pulaski County Extension Service at 606-679-6361.

Become a fan of [Pulaski County Horticulture](#) on Facebook and follow [@hortagentbeth](#) on Twitter and kyplants on Instagram.

The Lake Cumberland Master Gardeners have pine straw mulch for sale at the Pulaski County Extension office. It is sold in bales for \$7 per bale (50 and over, \$6 per bale). It can be purchased during office hours 8am to 5pm Monday – Friday.

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Figure 1. Rose slug sawfly and fresh feeding damage (Photo: S. Fox, Lyon County Extension Agent)