

Early spring, Early Pest

by Patricia Byrne

According to the followers of the Groundhog, we should see spring early this year or at the very least on time. No extended winter this year. The early warmth will give the lawns and gardens time to flourish before things get hot this summer. If you are putting in a garden, replanting plants, or putting in new ones, soil mix can be a key to strong growth. A soil mix with good humic material, compost, and mineral content will help plants flourish. Soil amendment products that contain activated silica or Diatomaceous Earth will assist your plants in root growth, withstand drought and insect invasion. That's right. Studies have shown that a plant with healthy levels of silica in the stems and leaves are able to absorb nutrients from the soil and retain water. Insects instinctively avoid plants with high silica content because it harms them when they chew on the leaves.

If you already have your garden planted then you will need to start thinking about protecting your plants from insect invasions. Our winter was not cold enough to reduce the insect populations. As soon as things begin to warm up insects will begin to appear. It is not too late to protect your plants by using silica. Good Diatomaceous Earth is 89% amorphous silica from a fresh water source. This type of DE is used as an insecticide and in soil amendments. As an insecticide it is dusted on the soil, stems, leaves, flowers, fruit, trees, and potted plants to protect them from insects. Ants that have attacked a tree can also be dusted in the hole where they are entering the tree. You will see hundreds of ants pour out of the tree to avoid the DE. The DE kills by mechanical means and only kills the insect while not harming the tree. Many other insecticides may kill ants but are harmful to the plants they are used on. DE insecticides are safe to be used around you, your family, and pets.

By mixing amorphous fresh water DE with good organic compost and a good organic fertilizer you give your lawn a head start this spring. If fleas have been nuisances in past years or still are, spread a generous amount of DE on your lawn. About four pounds to the acres will kill the fleas. Spreading the DE on the lawn will also deter ants from setting up home on your lawn. Spreading or dusting DE around the foundation of your home can prevent ants from coming into your home. Insects communicate and they are sensitive to energy. DE has an electrical signature and once insects come in contact they communicate to others to stay away. DE insecticides have been shown to be a deterrent.

It is important to use the right DE insecticides. There are many types of DE. If you are not familiar with Diatomaceous Earth used as insecticides or as a soil amendment, you might use types that are not effective for these purposes. Many have heard of DE being used in swimming pool filtration. This type of DE is crystalline not amorphous. This also makes it

ineffective as an insecticide. The particle size used in filtration is also too large. This type of DE is dangerous if inhaled. The type of DE insecticide that is safe to use is fresh water and has amorphous silica content not crystalline. The type is also milled to a smaller particle size. The DE used in the most effective DE used in insecticides is a tubular Diatom type with holes along its walls. When insects crawl through the DE it comes in contact with its exoskeleton. It is abrasive to the exoskeleton and absorbs the body fluids of the insects causing death. There are thousands of types of Diatoms. But this particular Diatom is the best shape and hardness to be effective for insect control. Salt water DE contains too many different shapes of diatoms and is too fragile to use effectively for insect control and would contain more impurities since it is not from a fresh water source. Deposits of DE that contain clay content are less effect because there are fewer diatoms per volume of DE.

Most of the Diatomaceous Earth Insect control products are safe and work well. They are less expensive than other insecticides that are toxic to your environment. Why not use something safe that you can use time and time again in so many ways and keep your environment safe.