



Pests on Roses

This spring we have seen some damage to roses mainly as a result of the Rose Slug Sawfly and the Rose Plume Moth. As we head into summer, we expect an appearance by the Japanese Beetles once again. The damage done by these insects is mainly cosmetic and rarely causes death of the plant.

Rose slug sawfly larvae feed on the upper layers of the leaf, leaving behind the lower, papery layer. This creates a brown, scorched appearance. The larvae are greenish yellow with orange heads and are about ½ inch long when fully grown. They resemble caterpillars but are not. Around mid-June, larvae will drop to the ground to pupate so, the damage from their feeding will end.



Rose Slug Sawfly Larva



Japanese Beetle Adults



Rose Plume Moth Caterpillar

The larva of the rose plume moth is a caterpillar and is approximately ½ inch long. It is light green with a reddish stripe running from its head to the middle of its body at one point in its life cycle. The adults are present June through August. New larvae are produced in fall and overwinter inside the stems of the rose. They resume feeding in spring (May). Plume moth larva has been most commonly found near the tips of rose bushes, damaging the buds and leaves and sometimes creating some webbing. The caterpillar's color blends with the color of new rose growth nearly perfectly, so they may be difficult to find. A lot of frass (insect feces) is also found in these areas.

Japanese beetle adults are one-half inch long, shiny, metallic green, oval insects with coppery-brown wing covers. The Japanese beetle has a one-year life cycle but spends most of its life in the soil as a grub. From mid-May to June, the young larvae pupate. The adults begin to emerge from late-June to August. The adult beetles feed on over 300 species of ornamental plants with roses, lindens, crabapples, and grapes being preferred hosts. Typically, adult beetles feed in large groups on the upper leaf surface, leaving only a lace-like skeleton of veins.

Management: (See Back for Product Recommendations)

Minor infestations of rose slug sawfly can be controlled by using a forceful jet of water to dislodge the sawfly larvae or by handpicking. Insecticidal soaps and other contact sprays can be effective. Prune out the damaged leaves. For rose plume moth larvae, pruning off infested tips may be the best management advice that can be offered. Feeding injury from adult Japanese beetles rarely causes death of a plant. When using a contact spray, treat when the beetles are present. Handpicking the beetles in the morning and dropping them into a soapy water solution is the easiest and most effective management of the beetle.

The following products can be used to protect your roses. Always follow product label directions:

	Rose Slug Sawfly Larva	Rose Plume Moth Caterpillar	Japanese Beetle Adult
Bonide Japanese Beetle Killer			X
EarthTone 3n1 Disease Control		X	
EarthTone Insecticidal Soap	X		
EarthTone Horticultural Oil	X		
Ortho Bug B Gone Garden Insect Killer		X	X
All-In-One Rose & Flower Care		X	X