



THE WEEKEND

TREE ADVISER

The Skeletons in Your Dogwood's Closet: Sawfly Damage



If your dogwood looks like it's wearing a skeleton costume this October, it may have been a feast for sawflies. These sneaky pests create what arborists call "skeletonization", meaning that they chomp down all the green leaf tissue between the veins, leaving behind a spooky framework that's pretty much the leafy equivalent of those plastic skeletons decorating your neighbor's yard.

Sawfly larvae are particularly destructive because they work in groups, systematically stripping your dogwood's foliage during late summer and early fall. What makes this especially problematic is the timing, because your tree needs those leaves to store energy before winter dormancy. Heavy defoliation stresses your dogwood right when it should be preparing for the cold months ahead.

The real horror story starts next spring when your damaged dogwood struggles to leaf out properly. Trees that suffered severe sawfly damage often show delayed budbreak, sparse foliage, and reduced vigor the following growing season. Some branches may even fail to produce leaves entirely, creating permanent structural damage.

A professional arborist can catch these pest outbreaks early and provide targeted treatments that protect your dogwood from becoming an unwanted Halloween accessory. RTEC's certified arborists monitor for sawfly activity and implement proven management strategies that preserve your dogwood's health and natural beauty year after year.

[Contact Us Today!](#)

The Creepy Crawlies You Want Around: Beneficial Insects



Not every bug deserves a spot on your Halloween horror list. In fact, some of nature's most frightening-looking creatures are actually your trees' best friends. Meet the wheel bugs and assassin bugs, the ultimate trick-or-treaters of the insect world who show up wearing scary costumes but spend their time protecting your landscape from the real villainous pests.

Wheel bugs earn their intimidating reputation with armor-like shells and prominent spines, yet these beneficial predators hunt down destructive caterpillars, aphids, and other harmful insects throughout the growing season. Assassin bugs might look menacing with their prominent beaks, but they use those weapons on pest species that threaten your trees and shrubs.

Basically, they're nature's pest control specialists working around the clock. They patrol your property, targeting sawfly larvae, scale insects, and other troublesome pests before populations explode into serious problems. A single wheel bug can consume hundreds of harmful insects during its lifetime, providing valuable protection that chemical treatments simply cannot match. They're real superheroes hiding their heroic identity behind menacing costumes.

But distinguishing helpful predators from harmful pests requires expertise that comes from years of training and field experience. RTEC's arborists understand the relationships between beneficial insects and tree health, ensuring that our treatment programs support these superheroes while controlling genuine threats to your landscape investment

[Contact Us Today!](#)

The Haunted Shrubs of Fall



Your beautiful shrubs might be hiding sinister secrets this autumn season. While their colorful fall foliage creates picture-perfect landscapes, tiny vampires could be draining the life from these woody ornamentals right under your nose. Eriophyid mites and other microscopic pests feed unseen throughout the season, leaving behind telltale signs of their supernatural presence.

These invisible invaders work quietly, causing leaves to develop unusual yellowing, bronzing, or distorted growth that doesn't match normal autumn color changes. Unlike the predictable progression of seasonal leaf drop, pest damage creates irregular patterns of discoloration and premature browning that signal trouble brewing beneath the surface. Shrubs under sixteen feet tall are the most vulnerable to these nasty, soul-sucking critters because they often escape regular professional monitoring. Property owners typically focus attention on large shade trees while overlooking the foundation plantings that frame their homes and define their landscape character.

Early detection makes the difference between minor pest issues and major plant health problems that persist into the following growing season. Professional monitoring during fall months reveals pest activity before it becomes visible to untrained eyes, allowing for preventive treatments that keep your plants strong and healthy.

RTEC's complete plant health care programs include regular monitoring of your ornamental shrubs, making sure that your beautiful landscape remains healthy, beautiful, and free from pest-related damage year after year.

[Contact Us Today!](#)

Recent Blogs



Noticing Issues with Your Trees? Here's Where Northern Virginia & Maryland Homeowners Should Start

For many homeowners in Northern Virginia and Maryland, the biggest question is: Where do I even start?

Start here:

[Read More](#)



A Closer Look at the Most Popular Fall Foliage in Virginia

Virginia's fall season is marked by natural beauty and is enjoyed by property owners, visitors, and tree lovers everywhere.

[Read More](#)

Get in touch with RTEC Treecare today at [703-573-3029](tel:703-573-3029) to discuss your tree care needs.



FOLLOW US ON *Socials*



Sent to: marketing@rtectreecare.com

[Unsubscribe](#)

RTEC Treecare, 2828 Mary Street, Falls Church, Virginia 22042, United States