

Garden Column for the Salisbury Post  
Darrell Blackwelder  
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Home gardeners are phoning and sending e-mails with questions about home gardens and landscapes. Plant growth has resumed for most plants with the recent rains, however the favorable environment often creates other plant related problems. Below are a few situations that you may have encountered.

Question: My tomato plants were doing well one day and are wilted and dead the next day. It does not kill of them, just a few. What could be causing this problem? Answer: What you have described sounds much like southern bacterial wilt. It is a soil borne disease that kills the plant after the plant reaches a certain size. There is no adequate control for the bacteria. Try to rotate your tomato plants to another area in the garden.

Question: I have patches of brown showing up on my lawn. It has been perfect until now. Is there anything I can do to eliminate the problem? Answer: Your problem sounds like brown patch. There are fungicides that will prevent the spread of the disease. Daconil, mancozeb, Heritage, Eagle and Bayleton are just a few fungicides that control the fungus. You must spray the entire lawn on a regular basis for adequate control.

Question: I have bats roosting on the eaves of the gables on my house. How do I get rid of them? Answer: Use a strong stream from the water hose and douse them frequently. They'll get the message and eventually leave. You must be persistent.

Question: I have thousands of black and red bugs crawling around my trees. What are these insects and how to I control them? Answer: These are most likely boxelder bugs. These are prevalent in early summer congregating in mass around boxelder trees and other maples. Control with general insecticides. They usually do not cause any severe problems, just an annoyance.

## Sad News

Steve Hooper, Master Gardener Volunteer, passed away last Saturday afternoon. Steve was our "go to" Master Gardener in the greenhouse, responsible for much of the upkeep, irrigation design and seed starting, including the tomato demonstration trials, bedding plants for the West End Garden and other educational programs. He was also a teacher, generous in his time with the Junior Master Gardener Program as well as other Master Gardener Volunteer adult programs. Steve was always willing to help and contribute with other projects as well as being a mentor. He will be sorely missed by all that knew him.

Darrell Blackwelder is an agricultural agent in charge of horticulture with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service in Rowan County. For archived garden columns or other information, visit the Rowan County Master Gardener web site at [www.rowanmastergardener.com](http://www.rowanmastergardener.com) , e-mail [Darrell\\_Blackwelder@ncsu.edu](mailto:Darrell_Blackwelder@ncsu.edu)