

## Rose problems cropping up

Pamela Corle-Bennett  
Published May 28, 2016  
Ohio State University Extension - Clark County

If you have roses, chances are pretty good that you might be seeing some holes or strange looking critters on your leaves.

I have had several comments from readers regarding rose problems, specifically complaints about holes in the leaves.

I discovered the rose sawfly complex on my roses this weekend. This is a complex because there are actually three types of sawflies that feed on rose leaves. They are the European, curled, and bristly roseslug sawflies.

These tiny sawflies look like caterpillars but are not in the caterpillar family but rather in the family related to bees and wasps (hymenoptera).

This is really important to know! Small caterpillars are controlled by a product called *Bacillus thuringiensis*. This will not work on sawflies. If you decide to use a pesticide, use products that are listed for controlling sawflies and roses.

Of the three species of sawflies in the roseslug sawfly complex, the bristly roseslug sawfly is the most damaging. It has three generations per year, therefore can cause damage all season.

The bristly roseslug sawfly larvae are pale green and are covered with short, hair-like bristles that you can see with a hand lens. The early stages of the larvae feed on the lower leaf surface and the damage caused is a "window pane" effect.

The windowpane symptom occurs after the early sawflies feed on just the lower surface of the leaf; the top surface remains and looks like a thin brown piece of tissue. This is visible from the top. Eventually this brown tissue falls out and leaves holes in the leaf.

As the larvae get bigger, feeding is more damaging as they remove the entire green tissue between the main veins.

The European roseslug sawfly has one generation and larvae are light green. They feed on the upper leaf surface in the spring.

The curled roseslug sawfly has at least two generations per year in Ohio. The light green larvae have white spots on their thorax and abdomen. In addition, they curl their bodies in a tight coil when disturbed, thus their name. They feed on the lower leaf surface.

Those with only one or two generations are not a huge problem for roses. Monitor the leaves and hand pick if you find them. New growth that occurs after this spring generation won't be damaged by the European and curled.

As mentioned, the bristly roseslug sawfly may stick around all season, thus you might want to select an insecticide to prevent heavy damage.

If you are going to use a contact insecticide, make sure you apply to the lower side of the leaves. You can also use a systemic product that will be taken up into the plant, killing the sawfly when it feeds on the leaves.

If you use the systemic product, do it now so that it can be taken into the plant.

Keep in mind, if you are spraying pesticides on your plants when they are in bloom, be very cautious not to spray the flowers, especially if bees are actively pollinating.

