

Plant lovers' corner

Spray saves holly from miners

UNIVERSITY PARK — Are the leaves on your holly trees covered with blotch-like mines? If so, the holly leaf miner is responsible, say Penn State specialists.

Holly leaf miners overwinter in holly leaves and emerge during May. The adults feed for about 10 days before females deposit their eggs in new leaves. Feeding damage appears as small punctures on leaves. These feeding punctures may be so numerous that leaves become distorted. An application of diazinon or metasystox-R when the small flies are present on the leaves during mid to late May, will prevent feeding damage. Egg laying occurs about the time new twig growth has three or four leaves. The mines become evident during late Summer. For further information on holly leaf miner control, call the Extension Office in your county.

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Vegetable garden weed control discussed

UNIVERSITY PARK — Many horticulturists believe that more gardens are abandoned because of weeds than for any other reason. The depressing sight of thousands of grass plants such as crabgrass and foxtails competing with tomato and other vegetable plants is enough to discourage any gardener. But don't despair, there are many ways to rid weeds in your garden. The oldest method is the use of the cultivator or the hoe.

However, to be successful, you have to get the weeds as they emerge from the ground and keep after them throughout the gardening season. If you let the weed plants get too big, they must be pulled by hand. The other method is the use of mulches such as black plastic, wood chips and other organic materials. Plastic comes in rolls from 36 to 48 inches wide and can be handled in two ways. If you're setting out plants, lay the plastic over the row, cover the edges with soil to keep it in place, and then punch a hole in the plastic just large enough to set the plant. If planting seeds you can use the same procedure or wait until the plant emerges and lay the plastic on each side of the plants. Newspaper also makes an excellent mulch. Lay the newspaper on each side of the plants, cover it with wood chips or place soil on the edges. By the end of the season or next Spring the newspaper will have disintegrated and can be plowed or spaded into the soil. Mulches such as plastic and newspaper are a haven for slugs, so keep an eye out for them.

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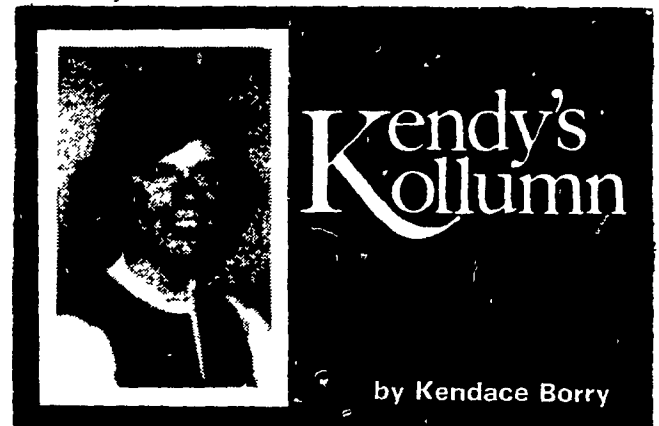
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Ever since I was a little girl and my brother stirred up a goose and "sicked" it on me, I have had an unreasonable healthy respect for large members of the poultry line. Ducks and chickens are all right but turkeys and geese look a lot better to me at a distance.

This was brought to my attention again this past week. I innocently stopped at a farm to take a picture of some lambs when I noticed a gigantic turkey roaming loose in the pasture. I went cold inside as I felt his little beady eyes sizing me up. They say animals can tell if you're afraid. Well, he knew within two seconds flat I was terrified of him.

The good farmer's wife got the lambs out and I prepared to take my shots. But, by that time, that old turkey knew he could ambush me any moment, and chalk up another victory to his long line of conquests. Suddenly it was hard for me to concentrate on taking pictures — I was mainly concerned with keeping my hostess between me and the glowering turkey.

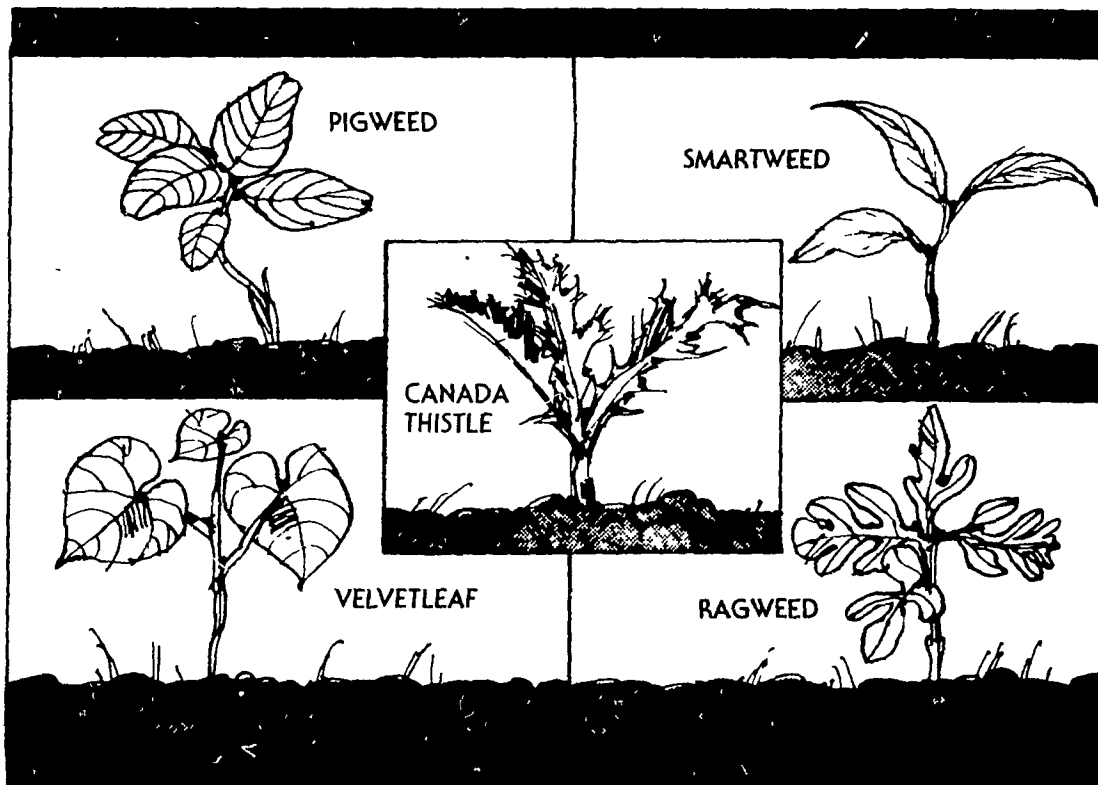
Seeing my fear, (my face must have been pure white by then), the lady of the house pulled out a shepherd's crook, and battled the big bird away. With shaking hands, I quickly took some pictures of cuddly lambs — all the time with one eye on the action to my left.

As soon as the lambs were back in the barn, I hastily thanked the good woman and put the fence between me and the ruffly-feathered-monster. Then I could breathe a sigh of relief.

But with my luck, next week I'll get an exclusive story on a new breed of giant geese.

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