

Bored to Death

My Bearded Iris have been severely plagued by Iris Borer for a very long time. Every year the clumps diminished; the most expensive faster than the old standards. This happened despite my attempts to stop the borer in the early stages by cutting leaves off whenever the telltale saw cut marks or streaking appeared on the leaves. I would clean up old leaf debris at least four times a year, and manually killed the disgusting, fat and juicy borer after it had made its way into the rhizomes. Even with all this effort, I wasn't able to stay ahead of the pest.

When I heard that Bayer has a product on the market that will control the borer, I went in search of it. From the Internet I learned that the ingredient—Imidocloprid, with the trade name of Merit—is the one that does the borer in. The people at Johannsen's Garden Center were very helpful by explaining to me that the Bayer Advanced Rose and Flower Insect Killer also includes another ingredient that works as a systemic along with the Merit. I found the Bayer blue spray bottle with red and yellow label for sale at Johannsen's, Home Depot, and Farm and Fleet.

I made the first and only application to the iris foliage around the first week of May. The irises are just coming into bloom now, Memorial Day weekend, and there is not a sign of the borer anywhere. It has been years since I've had such a glorious display of blossoms from my few remaining varieties.

I'm so happy that I can now look forward to collecting all those lovely, rich colors again.

—Rita Thomas