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IN THE GARDEN WITH MR. GREENJEANS

by Randy Arnowitz



Randy – Mr. Greenjeans – resides in a potting shed with 200 orchids and his golden retriever “Peaches.” He enthusiastically welcomes your gardening questions; address them to greenjeansmr@verizon.net.

Dear Mr. Greenjeans,

There is something wrong with my myoporum hedge. The new growth is coming out all puckered and disfigured. I tried shearing off the crazy new growth but the new leaves that grow back are also affected. Is this a disease, a new bug, or an alien life force that has taken over my once dense screen?

Signed,
Invaded



Dear Invaded,

The good news is that your myoporum hedge (*Myoporum laetum*) has not been taken over by aliens. The bad news is that it's been infested with a new species of sucking insect, or thrips. Officially known as *Klambothrips myopori*, this guy is native to coastal Eastern Australia and showed up in Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura and Santa Barbara

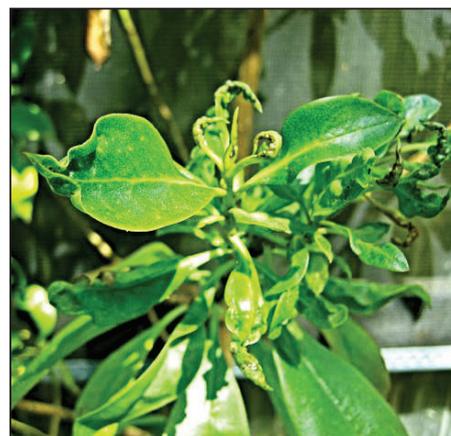
Festuca glauca 'Elijah Blue' after the “spa treatment,” as recommended by Agri-Turf Supply pest control advisor Robert Muraoka

myoporum hedge, now might be a good time to replace it with pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*), privet (*Ligustrum japonicum*) or pineapple quava (*Feijoa sellowiana*) and get rid of the bugs altogether.

Dear Mr. Greenjeans,

I planted 'Elijah Blue' fescue plants three or four years ago under my Japanese maple tree, but now they're looking really tired. They were vibrant and very blue for the first couple of years and now, not so much. Was I supposed to cut them back?

Yours truly,
Got The Blues



Unless you have a large estate, *Myoporum laetum* with “alien-like” damage should probably be replaced with pittosporum, privet, or other hedge material

Dear Got The Blues

There's nothing in the garden that compares to the steely blue color of *Festuca glauca* 'Elijah Blue'. This mounding, small-scale ornamental grass unfortunately is short-lived and probably will need to be replaced or divided every three years or so.

To keep it looking good in the meantime, cut it back to about 4 inches in the spring and give it a good feeding.

For the weak of heart try this: In the spring, instead of giving it a haircut, try lifting up the long foliage and pulling out the old, funky brown growth from beneath. Then, give each mound a small handful of Gro-Power fertilizer and thoroughly water it in.

Keep in mind, the plants will still be long, full, and shaggy, but the fresh, silvery blue color should return. Instead of a total facelift, think of this as more of a temporary botox treatment for your festuca. *My*

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Counties in 2006.

Some local nurseries and pest control people are recommending pesticide spraying and systemic approaches but I like the following idea better. **Robert Muraoka**, pest control advisor at Agri-Turf Supply suggests upping the irrigation to your myoporum. Since the pest attacks the juicy, new growth on the plant, he reasons that if you have an increase in this growth, the damage won't be as noticeable.

Myoporum laetum is a rapidly growing, large-scale hedge plant that, almost overnight can reach 30 feet tall by 20 feet wide. Unless you live on a large estate or the freeway, this may not be the most appropriate plant for your yard. If you accidentally share your garden with a