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### **HOW TO GET RID OF IRIS BORER**

The iris borer is the most destructive pest of iris. As an adult the iris borer is a drab colored moth with a wing span of about one inch. However, it is the caterpillar stage that does the injury. The borer winters in the egg stage on old iris leaves and debris at the base of the iris stalks. After hatching in early spring, the caterpillar crawls up and enters into the leaf tissue. During feeding, the tiny caterpillar works its way down the leaf, causing water soaked, brown streaks. In late summer it reaches the base of the iris and begins feeding on the rhizome. It is a small, slender caterpillar at first but by the time it reaches the rhizome, it has grown to 1 ½ to 2 inches in length. In addition to feeding injury, the borer introduces bacteria into the tissue which causes a soft rot. At the end of the summer the iris borer pupates in the soil at the base of the plants then emerges as a moth in the fall. The female moth lays eggs which over winter on the old iris plants and the cycle repeats.

Control is difficult – sanitation and insecticides are both important in the control of iris borer. Remove old leaves and stalks and dispose of any infested or rotting rhizomes. Cleaning up old iris plants in the fall removes the eggs and minimizes the number of iris borers that will be present next year. One application of an insecticide is necessary in the spring. The timing is very important because it is usually not noticed until it is too late for effective control. **Bonide Annual Tree & Shrub**, the recommended insecticide, should be applied as a soil drench. It is not necessary to dig up the rhizomes. Mix 2 Tablespoons to a gallon of water and wet the soil well.