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The Efficacy of Milorganite[®] as a Repellent for Rabbits

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ABSTRACT: The objective of the study was to evaluate the efficacy of Milorganite[®] as a repellent to mitigate damage on impatiens (*Impatiens walleriana*) by domestic New Zealand White rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*). This biosolid byproduct of an activated sludge processing technique has been suggested as a repellent for a number of species. Three, 4 m square pens were constructed with steel walls and subterranean wire to prevent escape. Two female and one male (2-3 kg) were housed in each pen and provided with shelter, water and 170 g per animal of a complete pellet ration daily. Three impatiens plants were placed in plastic planters (55 cm x 25 cm x 25 cm) with potting soil. Four planters were placed within a hole at respective corners of each pen, resulting in plants within 2.5 cm of being level with the ground. Two diagonal planters received topdressing of 2500 kg/ha or 0 kg/ha of Milorganite[®]. Changes in plant area as determined by digital photographs taken on day 0 and day 7 post-treatment were used as an indication of consumption. During the 21-day trial, new plants were treated and evaluated at 7-day interval. While plant areas were similar ($P > .10$) prior to treatment, area of control plants (17.2 ± 0.8) was lower ($P < .05$) than Milorganite[®] treated plants (21.2 ± 1.0). Differences in week ($P < .001$) were noted as a result of larger impatiens utilized during week 1 compared to remaining weeks. However, there was no treatment by week interaction ($P > .10$). No differences ($P > .10$) were observed for treatment plant location, pen or technicians determining plant area. Results of this study indicate Milorganite[®] was effective in reducing damage to impatiens by domestic rabbits.

Key Words: domestic rabbits, Milorganite[®], repellent

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