

Lace Bug



Adult Lace Bug: so named for the lace-like network of veins on their translucent wings



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Lace Bug

Description

Normally a relatively minor problem, lace bug damage has exploded in the landscape damaging foliage.

Lace bugs are tiny 1/4" long sucking insects. They are named lace bugs for the lace-like network of veins on their translucent wings. They are actually very pretty to look at with a hand lens.

Plants Affected

Rhododendrons, azaleas, and Indian plum (a common native shrub).

Symptoms / Damage

Adults and nymphs suck plant sap from the underside of leaves. This causes the leaf to appear stippled with minute white spots. Later, these small spots merge and the leaves turn yellow. Heavily infested plants become unsightly and vitality is reduced. Severe infestations may cause premature leaf drop, and even the death of small shrubs. The presence of these pests can also be determined by the black tar (fecal) spots they leave on the lower leaf surface.

Life Cycle

Lace bugs overwinter in the egg stage and hatching occurs usually in May. The young nymphs pass through 5 feeding stages (molts) before becoming adults and forming wings.

Management

Treatment

- Systemic foliar treatments starting in early spring
- Oil treatments in the fall help to control overwintering eggs.
- Neem oil, a botanical insecticide, can also reduce lace bug populations.

Cultural

- Remove unwanted, susceptible vegetation to help reduce feeding sites.



(Above) Leaf stippling caused by lace bugs sucking out the chlorophyll

(Below) Tar spots (excrement) from the lace bugs

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