

Farm & Home

Ag Line: Scale Insects

By Wade Parker
 County Extension Coordinator
 Scale insects are among the most serious pests of shrubs and trees in the landscape. Scale insects fall into two groups - armored (or hard) scales and soft scales. Both types of scale insects secrete a cover which protects them from weather, predators and insecticides. You can identify the scale by the type of cover it has and other characteristics. Scale identification may be important in selecting the proper control.

Armored scale identification: The scale insect's cover is separate from the body. If you flip the cover off an armored scale, the insect beneath it will remain intact. Armored scales feed on the contents of plant cells and do not produce honeydew.

Soft scale identification: The scale insect's cover is part of the skin of the insect. Flipping the cover of a soft scale tears the insect's body apart. Soft scales feed in the conductive elements of the plant, the xy-

lem and phloem. Like aphids and whiteflies, the soft scales produce lots of honeydew. This coats the foliage below with shiny, sticky liquid and supports the growth of sooty mold.

There can be as many as five or six generations of scales per year for some species, but most have just one or two. Some soft scales give birth to living young, but most lay eggs that hatch into mobile crawlers. The crawlers move out from under the cover of the female and settle down to feed on leaves or stems. Once settled, most lose their legs and do not move again. Others, like wax scale and cottony cushion scale, retain some degree of mobility throughout their lives.

The cover is secreted beginning with the first molt and provides very effective protection for the insects from weather, natural enemies, and insecticides. Scales can be small and hard to see, like obscure scale, or large and conspicuous like wax scale. The

main affect on infested plants is a gradual weakening that can lead to thinning of the plant's canopy, die back, and eventually death.

Contact insecticides are effective against young crawlers, but less so against later stages. Systemic insecticides can be very effective against soft scales, but only a few are effective against armored scales. Horticultural oils are also effective, as are insect growth regulators. The most common contact insecticide used is Orthene (acephate). Orthene can be purchased by homeowners at any local lawn and garden store. The biggest challenge is usually identifying scales as the problem.

Please do not hesitate to give me a call if you have any questions.

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Don Lively from page 4

hidden behind a brick wall, took umbrage.

"What's so @#*&\$%^ funny? I've been shot you know!"

I knew. It was my bullet. I didn't feel sorry for him. He started it.

"Toss out the gun and we'll quit teasing you, you big crybaby," Michelle responded.

West of my city is a foothill ridge known as The Hogback. Pat, an officer from another jurisdiction, and I chased a stolen motorcycle over the Hogback and arrested the driver. There's a fraternity among all cops and Pat and I, strangers until then, became friends that night.

Six days later he was shot dead by a thug in an ambush.

I found the yard where Street and Mongo accidentally released a huge frog they intended to stash in Fish's desk at the end of the shift. I stood on the front porch reading several rowdy parties a riot act while they chased their slimy quarry around the lawn.

Down south is the old Bennigan's where two partners and I went in to make an arrest. The whole bar turned on us and we had to literally fight our way back outside.

Fifty against three.

We won.

One night I attended a roll call with most of my old teammates.

Donn. A skinny cop with thick glasses and a Hawkeye Pierce haircut, who knows more about law

enforcement than anybody I know.

John. A real life CSI who has probably contributed to more crimes being solved than all those fictional TV accounts combined.

Dawn, who I spent many hours talking to between four and six in the morning after we'd tucked all the criminals into their cozy little jail cells.

Missing was Mike, who was a better tracker than most of the K9's. This summer, cancer did to Mike what hundreds of really bad people never could.

And Steve, our leader, who could chew you a new earhole at work then buy you a cold one after.

Yes, it's a fraternity. A brotherhood where sisters in blue are also welcome.

See why I miss them?

Stay low and keep moving, boys and girls.

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