

Control Scale Insects

Euonymus Scale, Oystershell Scale, Pine Needle Scale

What to Look For

Scale is an insect that may be hard to detect by the untrained eye. Once you know what to look for it can easily be found.



Euonymus Scale

Male scales are small, slender and chalky-white. Females are pear shaped, brown and twice the size of the males. They are found on all varieties of euonymus and will infest bitter-sweet and pachysandra. The insects attack both stems and leaves. Euonymus is often killed if the scale is not controlled. Mature female scales over winter on the host plants. The first young hatch in late May and early June. An early spring application of Ultrafine Oil will prevent some from hatching. Spray infested plants with Acephate or Permethrin in late May and repeat every 3 or 4 weeks until late August.

Oystershell Scale

These insects have a gray-brown waxy covering resembling a tiny oyster shell. They occur on many deciduous trees and shrubs. The insects become so numerous that the stems are encrusted. Continued sap feeding by the scales cause branches to become spindly and leaves to turn yellow, eventually killing the plant. An early spring application of Ultrafine Oil spray will prevent some scales from hatching. Eggs hatch from late May to mid-June. They begin feeding by inserting a thread-like tube into the stem. The most effective control is to spray twice beginning with the egg hatch. This is usually between June 1 and June 15. If the spring is unusually warm, begin spraying 7 to 10 days earlier. If observed after June 15, apply a third spray. Use Permethrin or Malathion.

Pine Needle Scale

Mature scales are small, slender and chalky white while the female is almost twice the length of males. Heavy infestations cause pine or spruce needles to turn yellow and cause death of individual branches. The insect winters in the egg stage under the scale covering of the dead female. Eggs hatch about the time new growth starts in the spring. The newly hatched crawlers move to green needles, begin feeding and produce the typical white covering. Insecticides should be used during the hatching period for maximum efficiency. A systemic such as Acephate or a contact spray containing Permethrin should be used when crawler stage occurs about June 1 and again August 20.

Detecting Crawlers

Control will be best if sprays are applied when the crawler (newly hatched) stage is present. Scale crawlers are minute, yellow, oval shaped insects. They are barely visible to the unaided eye, so regular examination should be made with a magnifier. Crawlers are only mobile during the first stage of development. For Oystershell and pine needle scales, examine infested branches or leaves beginning May 15. Observe each 5 to 6 days. Apply the first spray when the first crawlers are observed. After 10 days, spray again.



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