

EUONYMUS SCALE

Have you checked your euonymus lately? Euonymus scale often goes unnoticed until it has caused serious damage.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

The insects are small, white or grayish, and are generally found on the stems and underside of the leaves.

WHY TREAT FOR SCALE

Heavy infestations may cause complete defoliation and death of the plant. However, the first visible signs of damage is yellow spotting on the leaves, which may fall prematurely, causing plants lose their vigour and become spindly.

HOST

Euonymus scale affects a variety of host plants such as, euonymus, pachysandra, eugenia, daphne, hedera (Ivy), buxus (Boxwood), ilex (Holly), celastus (Bittersweet) and syringa (Lilac).

INSECT LIFE CYCLE

This pest belongs to a family of insects known as armored scales. They are an unusual group of insects that remain immobile on the plant throughout most of their lives. The female scales are grayish brown and are most often found on the stems and veins of the leaves. The males are smaller and white in colour and they can be found on the stems as well as the underside of the leaves. Euonymus scale is able to over winter as fertilized adult females. In early spring the eggs are deposited beneath the female's protective covering. The eggs hatch over two to three weeks in early June. Newly hatched scale are mobile for a brief period, during which they are known as crawlers. The crawlers move a short distance from their birth site and are sometimes blown to other susceptible hosts. They then insert their mouth parts into the plant, and lose their legs. Once settled, they produce a scale-like waxy covering and will remain there to feed. This cover protects the delicate soft-bodied insect beneath and is a barrier against insecticide. The females remain permanently attached to the plant and the males remain immobile until they molt into the adult stage. Adult males only live one day, during which they can fly and mate with mature females. The fertilized female over winters and the cycle begins again.

CONTROL

Scale can be controlled despite their protective coating. Horticultural oil, a natural insecticide, should be applied at the rate of 10 mL per litre of water. We recommend using a Dial-A-Mix hose end applicator for proper mixing and ease of application. Apply the oil in spring and also in late fall. Spray thoroughly, with emphasis on the stems and underside of leaves. Try to choose an overcast day to spray as the intense sun in combination with the oil may burn the plant. Avoid spraying when the temperature is above 80F or 27C. After 3 – 4 days, with a strong jet spray from your hose, spray off the oil. In early June, as well as mid-July it can be beneficial to spray with Insecticide Soap to eliminate the crawlers that are hatching. Crawlers lack the protective cover and therefore are much easier to control. Infestations can become quite severe; often pruning of heavily infested branches or replacement of the plant is the best option.

PREVENTION

Maintain good plant health through regular deep watering and fertilization. Plants growing close to structures where air circulation is poor are more susceptible than those grown out in the open. Also, it is important to inspect your plants frequently especially in the spring and fall. White dots on the underside of the leaves indicate the presence of scale and early treatment of an infestation provides more effective control.