

Houseplant Insect Management

3/30/2019

INSECT	CHARACTERISTICS	MANAGEMENT OPTIONS
Aphids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aphids common on houseplants are: green peach aphid, potato aphid, cotton/melon aphid, chrysanthemum aphid - Reproduce rapidly (generation completes in 2 to 3 weeks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wash with water - Most are highly resistant to insecticides - Imidacloprid very effective <p>Insecticidal soaps and pyrethroid insecticides may be effective</p>
Fungus Gnats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Like fruit fly on house plants; adults lay eggs in soil; hatch into white worms that live in soil for several weeks eating plant roots; emerge as gnats that only live for a few days to find a mate & lay more eggs; 21 day life cycle - Eggs hatch in soil cracks and at base of plant 	<p>Most Effective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use yellow sticky traps to catch adults - Bti (Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis) soil drench or beneficial nematodes (soil drench) to kill larvae - Avoid use of highly organic soil and fish emulsion which can favor development of fungi eaten by fungus gnats - Allow soil to dry out between waterings
Mealybugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - White cottony or waxy insects on underside of leaves/stems, crotches where leaves attach; looks like cottony masses - Most species also infest roots - Sooty mold can result from the honeydew 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separate houseplants - Wipe off with alcohol - Spray with a pyrethroid insecticide, insecticidal soap, oils or Neem (won't impact root feeding stages) - Apply systemic - Discard plant
Spider Mites (two-spotted)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two-spotted spider mite is most common - Often brought indoors when plant has been outside - Feed on plant sap - Look for webbing, leaves appear bronze or gray color 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wash plant and provide more humidity - Repeated spraying with jet of water (over several weeks) may reduce populations to low level - Discard heavily infested plant
Spider Mites (cyclamen mite & broad mite)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very tiny; no webbing produced - Cyclamen mite (cyclamens and African violets) often causes new growth to be stunted, twisted & sometimes killed back; leaves may appear small, thick & textured, - Broad mite produces bronzing of leaf underside on citrus and begonias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discard plants

INSECT	CHARACTERISTICS	MANAGEMENT OPTIONS
Scale (Soft)	<p>Soft scales (most common on house plants)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tan or brown shell, sap-eating insects live on the stems or leaves; vary in shape from flat to almost spherical - Secrete a waxy film (up to ½ inch long) that is part of the body. They may move short distances (but rarely do) - Produce copious amounts of honeydew, which can also lead to the growth of sooty mold 	<p>Soft scales (will most likely need repeated treatments over 2 to 4 months)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Isolate plant - Light infestation - hand remove scale with tweezers or lightly scrape off - Rub scale with cotton-ball, swab, or soft sponge - Spray w/ insecticidal soap or neem oil (test first to ensure it won't damage leaves) - Apply systemic w/ imidacloprid - Remove infested leaves - May need to discard plant
Scale (Armored)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less common than soft scales - Generally round in shape often with a distinctive central spot - Many cause spots around feeding site or cause die-back - Do not produce honeydew except for very brief period after egg hatch (in crawler stage) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Horticultural oils most effective - Systemics ineffective
Thrips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extremely small; can penetrate most screens <p>Look for: silvery areas on leaf surface, tiny dark spots of excrement, distorted and scarred petals of buds and developing flowers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yellow or pale blue sticky traps attract adults - Soaps or oils
Whiteflies (Greenhouse)	<p>Whiteflies are only an indoor problem in Yavapai County (too cold for survival outdoors).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most likely brought indoors on newly purchased plant. - Life cycle: 4-6 weeks. Main stages: eggs, nymphs and adults. - Eggs laid on underside of leaves. nymphs cause the most damage. Nymphs and adults suck juices from leaves, causing them to turn yellow and drop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spray undersides of leaves with insecticidal soap, neem, or horticultural oil - Use yellow sticky traps to catch adults - Vacuum from small plants - Insecticide with a pyrethrin or systemic w/ imidacloprid is highly effective

Note: Imidacloprid negatively affects bees and should be used with caution.