

Cottony Maple Scale

Prepared by
Camille Goodwin, MG 2008

Texas AgriLife Extension Service
Galveston County Office
Dickinson, TX 77539



Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

The Texas A&M System, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating.



Type Pest: piercing/sucking insect (*Pulvinaria innumerabilis* Rathvon)

Type Metamorphous: simple (egg, nymphs, adult stages)

Period of Primary Occurrence: spring and summer

- Immature females become active in spring, white egg sacs appear in early summer
- Crawlers hatch June to July and feed on leaves along veins, on undersides of leaves and return to twigs to overwinter in fall

Plants Affected

- Maples (especially silver maple), hackberry, sycamore, elm, euonymus, oak, dogwood, willow, poplar and various other landscape plants

Identifying Characteristics of Insect Pest

- Soft scale insect, 1/16 – 1/4" long, flat and pale to dark brown (Fig. 6 & 8)
- Most conspicuous when they produce protruding, cottony white egg sacs that may look like popcorn (Fig. 1-4)

Description / Symptoms

- Large amounts of honeydew secretions that support the growth of black sooty mold
- Heavy infestations cause leaf yellowing, premature foliage drop and dieback of twigs and branches
- Overwintering females complete development in May – June and lay eggs through late summer
- Each cottony white egg mass contains 1,000 – 1,500 eggs (Fig. 1-4)
- Eggs hatch into crawlers in late June through July
- The crawlers are flat, oval, brown insects with two distinct eyes, short antennae, tiny legs and are very small...about the size of a period on this page (Fig. 5-8)
- Crawlers then migrate to the underside of leaves and insert their piercing-sucking mouthparts along the midrib and then withdraw sap from the tree's vascular cells
- Crawlers spend the remainder of the summer feeding on leaves



Best Management Practices (BMP)

NONCHEMICAL CONTROL

- Natural soft scale predators include lady beetles, lacewings, midges, parasitic wasps and birds

CHEMICAL CONTROL

- Chemical controls include horticultural oil, insecticidal soap, insect growth regulators and broad spectrum foliar applied insecticides such as carbaryl, imidacloprid, bifenthrin, malathion and pyrethroids
- These controls should only be used for extreme infestations because beneficial insects will also be killed
- Timing is important; check insecticide label to see if horticultural oil is safe to use on specific maples that are sensitive to them if applied after the maple sap has begun to flow



The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service is implied.

Use pesticides only according to the directions on the label. Individuals who use chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. If the information does not agree with current labeling, follow the label instructions. The label is the law.

Always remember to read and heed six of the most important words on the label: "KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN"

All images are copyrighted by the Galveston County Master Gardener Association (GCMGA). These images are for educational use only and may not be used for commercial or non-educational purpose without written permission from GCMGA.

Texas AgriLife Extension Service • Galveston County Office • 5115 Highway 3 • Dickinson, TX 77539
281-534-3413 • <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston>