

# Kansas Insect Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants and Extension Personnel



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August 20, 2010 No. 22

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## Magnolia Scale

Although there are many different types of scale pests that feed on trees and shrubs during the summer, now is the time to be aware of and deal with crawler stages of the magnolia scale, *Neolecanium cornuparvum*, which are actively moving about looking for a place to settle down and feed. Magnolia scale is the largest scale insect in the United States and feeds on both star and saucer magnolia. Crawlers are primarily located on the undersides of 1 to 2 year old twig growth. They eventually produce a powdery, waxy, white covering over their bodies. Magnolia scale overwinters as a first-instar crawler or nymph, with one generation per year in Kansas.

Magnolia scale females are 1/2-inch long and red-brown in color. They are initially covered with a white, waxy powder. During August and September, females deposit eggs, which hatch into crawlers/nymphs that are oval in shape and gray to red in color with a ridge extending down the back. Magnolia scale is a soft scale and produces copious amounts of honeydew, which may result in shiny, sticky leaves, as well as sticky sidewalks and vehicles (e.g., cars and trucks) located underneath infested trees. The crawler or nymphal stage is very susceptible to applications of insecticides including acephate (Orthene), potassium salts of fatty acids (Insecticidal Soap), petroleum oils (horticultural or summer oils), malathion, and pyrethroid-based insecticides (e.g., bifenthrin, cyfluthrin, and lambda-cyhalothrin). All plant parts must be thoroughly covered with the spray solution. Since magnolia scale is a soft scale, soil applications of imidacloprid (e.g. Merit and many generics) may be effective if applied early enough.

Although insecticides are effective against magnolia scale—especially the crawlers or nymphs—the primary means of dealing with magnolia scale is by promoting plant health through proper watering, fertility, mulching, and pruning practices. These practices may decrease susceptibility or limit the amount of injury when plants are infested with low to moderate populations of magnolia scale. Another option, if feasible, is to use a forceful water spray to physically remove magnolia scales from infested plants. This method removes all the life stages...quickly. There are a number of natural enemies including ladybird beetles that feed on magnolia scales; however, they are usually not abundant enough to provide adequate suppression/regulation of magnolia scale populations. During a recent trip to Maine, one of the highlights was I found a saucer magnolia that was “literally covered” with magnolia scales...I was in “entomological heaven.” Below are images from this tree.

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*Raymond Cloyd*

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## Report from the Kansas State University Insect Diagnostic Laboratory:

The following samples were submitted to the Insect Diagnostic Laboratory from August 6<sup>th</sup> to August 19<sup>th</sup>.

August 6 2010 – Miami County – Cynipid gall wasp on oak  
August 13 2010 – Rooks County – Spruce spider mites on Alberta spruce  
August 13 2010 – Nemaha County – Bur oak bullet galls  
August 16 2010 – Morris County – Cicada killer around home  
August 17 2010 – Jackson County – Lace wing adults and nymphs on aster plants  
August 17 2010 – Pratt County – Eriophyid mite galls on black walnut  
August 17 2010 – Barber County – Possible insect feeding on Austrian pine  
August 18 2010 – Riley County – Spiny-backed spider  
August 19 2010 – Van Buren County, Michigan – Cicada killer  
August 19 2010 – Phillips County – False chinch bugs  
August 19 2010 – Labette County – Fuzzy cynipid oak galls

If there are any questions regarding these samples or about the identification of any arthropod please contact the Insect Diagnostician at (785) 532-4739 or [GotBugs@ksu.edu](mailto:GotBugs@ksu.edu).

*Holly Davis*

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Sincerely,

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