

Kansas Insect Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants and Extension Personnel



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May 14, 2010 No. 8

Spirea Aphid

Spirea aphid (*Aphis spiraecola*) is out-and-about feeding on spirea (*Spiraea* spp.) shrubs in landscapes. Spirea aphid colonies congregate on the terminal growth (**Figures 1 and 2**) and their feeding cause leaf curling and stunted plant growth. The aphids prefer to feed on the stems and leaf undersides of succulent new growth. All mature aphids are parthenogenic (reproduce without mating) giving birth to live nymphs, which themselves are females. Eggs are laid on the bark or on buds in fall by wingless females after they have mated with males. Eggs hatch in spring, and young nymphs develop into stem mothers that are wingless. Spirea aphid females are pear-shaped and bright green in color. Stem mothers reach maturity in approximately 20 days. Each spirea aphid female can produce up to 80 offspring (young females). Although honeydew is produced; continual rainfall will wash it off plants. In summer, both winged and non-winged forms may be present. Winged forms typically appear when conditions become crowded on infested plants, and then they migrate to a more suitable food source (another spirea plant) to start another colony. Heavy rainfall and strong winds will knock spirea aphid colonies off plants, onto the ground, where they eventually die. Frequent applications of “hard water sprays” will also quickly remove spirea aphid populations without disturbing natural enemies (e.g., parasitoids and predators). There are a number of natural enemies including ladybird beetles (**Figure 3**), green lacewings, and hover flies that may help to regulate or suppress spirea aphid populations.

Since spirea aphids are, in general, exposed, routine applications of insecticidal soaps (active ingredient=potassium salts of fatty acids) and/or horticultural oils including petroleum-based, paraffinic, and neem (active ingredient=clarified hydrophobic extract of neem oil) may be effective in suppressing populations of spirea aphid. These materials only have contact activity, so thorough coverage of all plants parts is important. Also, they are less harmful to natural enemies compared to conventional insecticides.



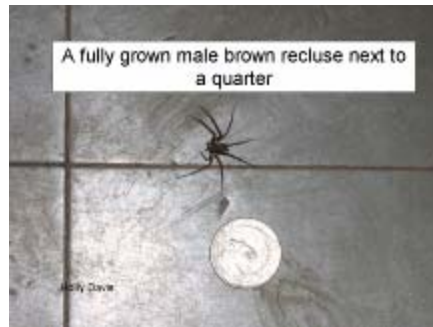
Raymond Cloyd

Brown Recluse Spiders

The brown recluse is probably the most commonly known, greatly feared, often misidentified spider in Kansas. Although homeowners are often upset when a brown recluse is discovered in the home, these are a very common spider and are likely present in most homes throughout Kansas, old and new.

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Although these spiders may vary some in body color and leg color, they will never have any spots or differently colored bands on the legs or abdomen. The key identifying feature is the violin-shaped pattern on the front of the body (see photos). Even though they often live indoors where they are protected from harsh weather, they tend to be inactive from September through March. Hence, the current renewed activity of these spiders this spring is allowing homeowners to find them more readily. These spiders are nocturnal, active hunters, moving throughout the house during the night hours. They tend to spend the daylight hours hidden in areas of the home where there is little air movement and reduced light such as in closets, under furniture, and behind boxes. Brown recluse spiders may be detected and monitored by placing glue traps on the floor close to walls, beneath sinks, and behind furniture.

For more information on the brown recluse and other spiders and scorpions in Kansas, please visit:

<http://kpbs.konza.ksu.edu/Spiderbites.pdf>



Holly Davis

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Report from the Kansas State University Insect Diagnostic Laboratory:

The following samples were submitted to the Insect Diagnostic Laboratory from May 7th to May 13th.

May 7 2010 – Sedgwick County – Northern mole cricket in yard
May 7 2010 – Riley County – Merchant grain beetle in home
May 10 2010 – Riley County – Brown recluse spider in home
May 10 2010 – Bourbon County – Carpet beetle larvae in home
May 11 2010 – Bourbon County – Abiotic debris in home
May 12 2010 – Sumner County – Soft brown scale on elm tree
May 12 2010 – Shawnee County – Dermestid beetles in commercial building
May 12 2010 – Shawnee County – Common house spider
May 13 2010 – Neosho County – Oak lecanium scale on pin oak
May 13 2010 – Riley County – Cobweb spider

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.

Holly Davis

Sincerely,

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