



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

Backyard Buddies

Your monthly guide to pests, weeds & diseases

Sap Sucking Solutions



Scale- those sap sucking insect pests which love to attach themselves to your plants and extract sugars and nutrients at leisure. All they need is a favourable environment. Some are particular to a host plant, others couldn't care less what they feed on.

There are two types of scale, distinguished by their body covering. Soft scales secrete waxy film which form part of their body and provide protection. These scale produce 'honeydew' (excretion of plant sugars) which attracts ants and other sugar feeders and is also the food source of sooty mould, a fungus which grows on the honeydew turning branches black and can interfere with the plant's photosynthesis.

Hard scales make a hard shell-like covering separate from their bodies which makes controlling them more difficult. They do not produce honeydew.

From an egg hidden under the protection of its mother, a scale's life begins as a 'crawler' (juvenile) which moves around to find a favourable feeding spot. They then become

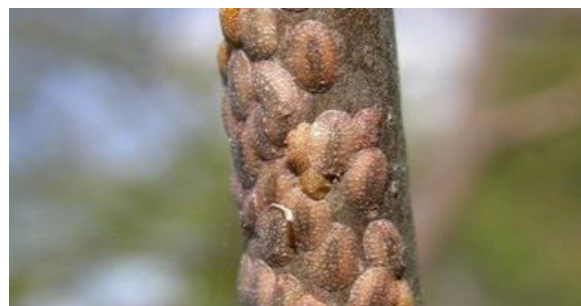
inert, growing into an adult and forming their protective covering. Crawlers are more susceptible to control.

The easiest way to control scale is using horticultural oils (which smother the scale) and soaps (which dry and desiccate). These products won't affect beneficial biological agents such as parasitic wasps, lacewings and ladybird larvae. In non-edible plants eg pittosporum hedges, it may be more successful to use a systemic insecticide which the scale ingest while feeding, however this can affect beneficial agents too.

If you see any unusual scale send photos to PaDIS or MPG. Ants can be best controlled by having them identified for the correct control advice.

As always

If you find interesting, unfamiliar or pesty creepy crawlies in your garden, remember you can phone or email our Pest and Disease Information Service (PaDIS) for advice regarding sample submission and identification services on (08) 9368 3080 or info@dpird.wa.gov.au. Alternatively, try our MyPestGuide website (mypestguide.wa.gov.au) or free MyPestGuide Reporter app!



Report suspect pests



MyPestGuide™ Reporter
via app or online
mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au



Pest and Disease Information Service
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