FACT SHEET

Magnolia Scale

Rainbow Treecare

An Insect That Damages Oak Trees

Scales are aphid-like insects that produce a covering over themselves as protection from predators and conditions in their environment. Magnolia scale feeds by sucking out the sap from the twigs and branches of magnolias. This feeding can weaken and girdle branches while producing a sticky substance called "honeydew" on leaves and anything below the tree.

Infested Trees Require Treatment for Control

A number of magnolia species are susceptible to magnolia scale, including the Star, Saucer, Cucumber and Lily magnolias. A combination of treatments is necessary to bring populations under control. The regime of treatments takes more than one season to take full effect. Without treatment, magnolias can be disfigured or killed.

Scale feeding can cause dieback of branches.

What to Look for

- Sticky "honeydew" on leaves and anything underneath the magnolia.
- Blackened surfaces where honeydew has fallen and turned to "sooty mold".
- Large numbers of bees and wasps swarming around the magnolia.
- Lumpy gray, white or beige colored scales on twigs and branches.
- Branch decline on severely infested twigs.

Scales form large, oval protective coverings over themselves.

Life Cycle

- Females lay eggs from mid-summer to fall.
- Newly hatched scales emerge from August to October and feed on branches.
- Young scales overwinter and begin growing the following spring.
- Scales grow rapidly and excrete honeydew.
- Adult females die in the fall after reproducing, leaving behind a hollow brown shell.

Surfaces blackened by "sooty mold".

Treatment and Prevention

- Reduce stress by providing adequate watering.
- Increase vigor with Root Enhancement Service and mulching.
- Control with a combination of treatments, properly timed sprays and applications of systemic insecticide.