

Lace bugs

Adult lace bugs are small, about 1/8 an inch, and highly sculptured on the upper surface. The thorax and front wings are expanded and have numerous transparent cells that look like lace. Nymphs, or immatures, are wingless, smaller, and often covered in dark spines. Eggs are inserted into leaf tissue and covered with dark excrement. Lace bugs are found on the underside of leaves.



Lace bug adults and nymphs have piercing-sucking mouthparts and suck juices from plant tissue. Feeding damage causes yellowing, stippling, and bleaching of the leaves, but damage usually isn't seen until late summer. The insects' dark excrement can also be unsightly both on the plant as well as surfaces underneath the plant.



While lace bugs are typically not a problem for healthy plants, when populations are especially high or last for a long period of time, it may cause leaf drop or a reduction in plant growth. Since healthy plants usually do not die from lace bugs, try to keep plants in top health using cultural control methods (right plant/ right place, proper watering & fertilizing, etc.). Damaged foliage will not repair, so will either need to be replaced with new growth or pruned from the plant. Conserve beneficial organisms to help naturally reduce pest populations.

Any pesticide treatment that you choose will need to be targeted to the underside of the leaves. Less toxic options would include things like insecticidal soap, azadirachtin, or pyrethrins.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

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