

INSECT PESTS OF MAPLE TREES

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Cottony Maple Scale — is a very common insect pest of maple. It is found on several species of maple trees plus on a variety of other plants. It can be easily identified as it resembles a string of popcorn wrapped around a branch. Heavily infested trees usually lose some twigs, branches or limbs to this insect. Occasionally the entire tree may succumb. Branches and foliage of the tree sometimes look black. This is caused by the great secretions of honeydew produced by the scale continuously dripping on the lower branches of the tree, automobiles and sidewalks. Growing in this secretion may be a sooty mold causing it to appear black.

Control can be accomplished in two ways: (1) In late winter an emulsifiable dormant oil spray can be used or (2) spray with Malathion in early July. Illinois is a long state with a difference of about four weeks in the growing season. Southern Illinois would spray probably during the last weeks of June while northern Illinois the last weeks of July. Timing is very important when spraying for scales. The only time control with insecticides is successful is when they are in the crawling stage.

The Green-Striped Maple Worm — is a caterpillar that will eat entire leaves of the tree. Occasionally entire defoliation of the tree will occur. The caterpillar is about two inches long and is yellowish green in color with green stripes running lengthwise along its back. For control use Carbaryl (Sevin) as soon as the worms are seen feeding.

An insect called the **Pigeon tremex** is found on a variety of trees and shrubs including maple. Trees found infested by this insect, nine times out of ten, are probably dead or in a dying condition and should be removed. However, let's not blame the insect for causing the tree to die. Trees that are diseased or that are already in a dying condition are the trees in which this insect will be found.

This insect is about two inches long with a redish head and body and resemble wasplike sawflies. The female lays her eggs by boring a hole in the trunk of the maple tree. No chemical control is recommended.

The pigeon tremex is usually biologically controlled by parasitic wasps. The female parasitic wasp drills a hole with fantastic accuracy where a pigeon tremex grub tunnel is. There an egg from the wasp is laid, hatched into a larva which finds the tremex grub and kills it.

Aphids — are often a cause of tremendous problems in residential areas. The insects will suck the sap from the underside of the leaves and secrete unbelievable quantities of honeydew that will wet sidewalks, streets, parked cars, etc. The aphid itself usually will not cause enough damage to large trees to justify the cost of spraying. Spraying can be justified only by the individual concerned if they become an unbearable nuisance. Control can be accomplished by spraying with Malathion.

The **flat-headed apple tree borer** — will occasionally be found in maple trees. Trees that are in a weakened condition by transplanting, hot dry weather, damage, etc., can be attacked by borers. The adult beetles are metallic colored about one-half inch long. A well fertilized healthy tree is the best defense

against borers. Newly set trees should be wrapped with heavy paper the first two years. DDT is the insecticide of choice for borer protection. Follow label directions for application rates.

Maple bladder gall mite — can be found on the top sides of maple leaves. The young galls are green, as they get older they turn red and finally black. They resemble tiny pimple-like protrusions on the leaf. This particular problem is very common, however, it is doubtful whether they cause any damage to the tree other than make the leaves look unsightly. Control can be accomplished if desired by using Malathion after the buds on the maple are swollen but before new leaves appear in the spring. Sprays that are applied after the gall develops are useless. Timing of application is as important for control of galls as for the control of scales.

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