

PEST PROBLEMS ON SPRUCE

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Spruce Spider Mite:

Spruce spider mites are very small, but because of their great numbers in population they can do much damage. It can be one of the most troublesome pests of arborvitae, spruce and juniper. This mite takes the juices out of the plant. When the rich green color of the foliage begins to turn gray, then brown, it is too late to prevent all damage, however immediate treatment may eliminate serious damage or death of the plant.

The eggs overwinter at the bases of the needles and in early spring produce tiny, light green mites. After molting several times they mature into larger, darker green mites. To discover mite infestations on your plants before damage occurs hold a piece of white paper underneath the branches with one hand and strike the branch with the other. If your plants are infested the mites can be easily seen in this manner. This particular species has several generations per year. For control use a good miticide, such as Kelthane, as soon as the mites are detected, usually in April or May.

Cooley Spruce Gall Aphids:

Thick, elongate galls at the tips of twigs of Colorado blue spruce, Sitka spruce and Engelman spruce are produced by this species. The galls are usually very heavy and cause the tips of the branches to bend. About mid-July, the galls open and aphids emerge. Some of them develop wings. These winged forms migrate to Douglas fir, where the female will lay her eggs. On Douglas fir the eggs and young gall aphids are covered with patches of cottony wax. The cooley spruce gall aphid does not develop on Douglas fir. For control use malathion either in early spring or in late September or early October.

Eastern Spruce Gall Aphid:

This insect produces pineapple-shaped galls near the bases of spruce twigs. Norway spruce can be damaged severely. Treatment for the Eastern spruce gall aphid is exactly the same as the cooley spruce gall aphid.

Spruce Budworm:

This pest occasionally attacks ornamental spruces. The larva is a dark, reddish brown caterpillar about 1-inch long. It feeds on the opening buds and needles tying them together with strands of silk. This insect overwinters as a caterpillar and in the summer about mid-July emerges as a dull gray moth. The female then mates and lays eggs, greenish in color on the needles. Sevin will do an excellent job on the larva and should be used when they are seen actively feeding.

Spruce Bud Scale:

Clustered at the nodes and buds of spruce can be seen a mahogany-brown globular shaped scale. In June the overwintering female fills her shell, about 1/16 to 1/8-inch in diameter, with purple eggs. Hatches in Illinois, because of the length of the state, can run from mid-June through mid-July. The flat, in appearance, purple, tiny, crawling stage emerges

from the hard scale to settle down in a new place on the plant. Control, using malathion, should take place when the young are seen crawling.

Pine Needle Scale:

This scale species can be found on Austrian and Mogho pines as well as other pines and spruces. The purple insect sucks sap and chlorophyll out of the needles causing them to lose color and drop. Control must take place, using malathion, when the scale is in the crawling stage in June.

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