



# TEXAS A&M FOREST SERVICE

## *Tree Health Issues:*

## **Crape Myrtle Bark Scale**

**Identification:** Crape myrtle bark scale was introduced to the US from Japan & China. It feeds on crape myrtle trees & pomegranate shrubs. The insects appear as white or gray, fuzzy, waxy encrustations. These are large white cases that enclose the adult female scale & egg clusters. When the scale is crushed, it oozes bright pink liquid. They are found near pruning wounds, in branch crotches, & under loose bark.

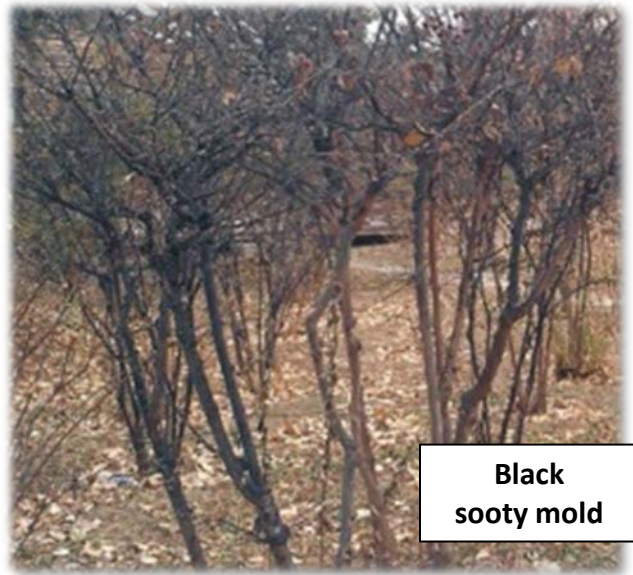


**Signs & Symptoms:** Crape myrtle bark scale excretes honeydew that coats the trunk & branches of the tree. Black sooty mold grows on the honeydew, resulting in a black coating on the trunks & branches.



**Cause of Spread:** Since introduction into the US, it has been transported across the county on infected nursery stock, & dispersed by birds & wind.

**Effects to Tree:** Black sooty mold creates a displeasing appearance. If untreated, reduced health, growth & flower production can occur.



**Black sooty mold**



**Not Infected**

**Infected**

**Prevention:** Prevent infection by inspecting nursery stock at time of purchase. Crape myrtle bark scale is attracted to

fresh pruning wounds. To reduce attacks, avoid creating large pruning wounds on the tree.



**Predation:** One insect that has shown success in reducing crape myrtle bark scale populations is the twice-stabbed lady beetle. These beetles cannot be used in conjunction with insecticides as they will be harmed.



**Adult  
Beetle**

**Beetle Larvae**

**Treatment:**

**Step 1** - Using soapy water & a soft bristled brush, or a pressure spray nozzle attached to a hose, remove the black sooty mold, loose bark, scales, & egg masses. Reducing the number of scales on the tree, increases insecticidal effectiveness.

**Step 2** – In May & July, treat the tree’s root zone with a systemic insecticide. Approved insecticides are Dinotefuran & Imidacloprid. Allow several weeks for insecticide to spread through tree & work. Insecticides can also be sprayed on trunk & branches. Insecticides approved for spraying are Acephate & Imidacloprid. Follow directions on the label. Repeat as necessary annually until scales are gone. **Some of these products can kill bees, so remove flower heads during treatment to avoid attracting bees to the tree.**

**Step 3** - Optional & has not been proven effective, but may reduce scale populations. In winter, to avoid damaging leaves & buds, spray tree trunk & branches with dormant horticultural oil. The oil kills scales upon contact. Avoid spraying leaf buds if they are swelling in late winter.