

# Spider Mites



Though most of us may consider spider mites an insect, they are arachnids having eight legs and are related to the spider. Spider mites are pests causing problems to our houseplants as well as to our plants in our yards and gardens.

These tiny arachnids cause injury to foliage as they feed, sucking the plant's moisture while bruising its cells with their "small, whip-like mouthparts and ingesting the sap." (Rhoades, July 2014) Initially, the damage may appear as curled, yellow leaves with small speckled yellow or brown spots. If the plant is badly infested, the leaves may turn completely yellow and the plant will no longer thrive.

Spider mite infestation tends to occur during periods of dry, hot weather or when plants have not been well watered. Because our weather in Oklahoma is so unpredictable, it's especially important to keep a regular watering schedule during our hot summer months.

Trying to see spider mites is very difficult with the naked eye. If you suspect that your plant has spider mites, you can hold a piece of paper under the leaves of the plant and shake them gently. If it is spider mites, specks will fall on the paper looking similar to dark granules of sand or pepper.

For a natural treatment, spray the plant with a water hose forcing most of the spider mites off, and treat plant with ladybug larva. Ladybug larva is a natural predator to the spider mite. If you still notice the spider mites, even after your best precautions, we recommend our **Hi-Yield 55% Malathion Spray** or **Natural Guard Insecticidal Soap**.

For more information on spider mite control, contact us at Marcum's Nursery.

Factual information on spider mites was retrieved from the following resources:

Garden Center News: What's Bugging You? Retrieved from <http://gardenpartners.com/library/spidermite2007.php>

Rhoades, H. (July 28, 2014). How To Treat Spider Mites On Houseplants And Outdoor Plants. Retrieved from <http://www.gardeningknowhow.com/plant-problems/pests/spider-mite-treatment.htm>

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