

Scale Insect

Remember on your deck, the patio furniture, your house and cars. If you lived in the woods chances are good you had this sticky substance all over, and eventually it would turn everything black. Well we here in dc had that exact problem. The start of the 2015 summer started out like any other normal year, but when the temps started rising, the phone lines at dts started ringing off the hook. Annoyed property owners wondering why the trees are making such a mess? They have to go out every day and clean up the cars, the grills, any thing under the trees. The question we get in a frustrated tone of voice is why are the trees dripping sap so much for? Then that starts the conversation of what's really going on. It not the trees them selves, the trees are a unwilling victim of a insect called scale. Many people have probably never Heard of it

Especially when insects like emerald ash borer and Japanese beetle get the bulk of the headlines now days. But the summer of 2015 scale was definitely the attention getter.

Every once and a while, populations of scale insect can explode which is what we saw this last summer. So what's up with this scale anyway? Scale is usually in low numbers and blends into the background most of the time going unnoticed, they are strange looking and don't really look like an insect. They remain in the same spot covered by a waxy protective coating as adults. They are often mistaken for buds, part of the bark, or something other than a insect.

Scale insects have narrow, tube like mouth parts, which they use to suck fluids from the tree. Like aphids, scale can end up secreting sugary honeydew. This honeydew is the reason why the scale was so noticeable this past year. In addition to being a sticky nuisance honeydew can also lead to the growth of black, sooty mold and attract ants, wasps, and other insects.

Usually the scale is kept in check by natural predators, parasites. However, when the conditions are just right, scale populations can explode. In time the natural checks and balances will come into play bringing the scale back under control. Unfortunately, for how bad the scale was this last year, it's more than likely to be a problem again this summer. In the meantime there are steps that can be done to help the problem, one is as simple as not having your yard sprayed for mosquitoes, that may kill some of the scale's natural predators. The best option is to have a arborist come out evaluate your trees and come up with a maintenance plan to help with the scale. Here at dts we have tree health care specialists with extensive knowledge on the scale problem, and what it takes to help minimize the frustration, and dealing with the mess from annoying critters.

Scale is in my opinion one of the hardest insects to control, but the protocol we have been using has proven to be a very effective. If you would like a free consultation of your trees and what could be done to help, contact our office @ 920-823-2259 and speak directly to our certified arborist or e-mail treecare@davestreeserviceinc.com

