

January 6, 2008

**NEWS RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF:**

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## **Horticultural Oils**

Now is a good time to control scale insects on evergreen shrubs and trees such as camellias, hollies, enonymus, photinias and boxwood through use of a horticultural oil spray. Fruit and nut trees may be sprayed at this time of year in order to control insect eggs that may have been laid in bark and twig crevices.

Usually, the oil treatment will need to be applied only once a year, and is an excellent way to smother a pest that is difficult to eradicate. At times even live oaks fall prey to scale, but due to difficulties of size these plants are much harder to work with. Horticultural oils also have the benefit of being less environmentally harsh than pesticides.

Trees and shrubs are often unable to withstand the continual drain of sap from these sucking insects, and may ultimately be killed. Treatment consists of thoroughly spraying with horticultural oil according to directions, from every direction over the leaves and twigs.

There are several thousand species of "Scale insects". Armored scale insects are capable of navigating to fresh feeding grounds when very small, but then live and feed under a protective hard, waxy shield as adults. Tea scales, oyster scales, eunonymous scales and wax scales are examples of these. Control sprays work best at a time when the young, unprotected 'crawlers' are present on twigs and bark and can also aid in protection against aphids, white flies and spider mites.

Scales often secrete "honeydew", a sweet solution that is soon invaded by fungus, creating a darkened, sticky appearance on leaves and even on other nearby

plants known as "sooty mold". After scale insects have been killed, the bodies will still stick in place and the blackened, sooty mold effect has to wear off the leaves over time. Other species of scale present a more cottony appearance. Some, such as Mealy bugs (Pseudococcidae), are able to move about on plants throughout their lives, and may be found down inside bulbs as well as in clusters over plants, or concealed in debris such as fallen leaves nearby.

For successful spraying, look for a period in the late winter that will be relatively warm, but without a forecast of rain for at least two days (45 – 70 degrees F). Carefully follow the label directions in order to apply the correct dilution formula, especially if you plan to spray fruit trees beginning to break dormancy. If there are any doubts, spray a small area and wait a few days to check the results.

After a few weeks, check to see if spraying has killed most of the scale present. Pry off a domed scale with a thumbnail and press. If the shell is dried, the treatment has worked. If there is still yellow, orange or white viscid material, the scales are still living.

## Pesticide Recertification Programs

2008 is going to start off as a busy year with several educational programs that have been planned. Gregg, Harrison and Upshur counties have teamed-up to present a series of pesticide credit hour program for those that will be needing CEU's toward their pesticide license.

The first session will be held this Friday in Gilmer, at the East Texas Yamboree Exhibit Building, just north of Gilmer on hwy. 271 North, next door to Wal-Mart. The program will start at 8:30 AM with registration and the program will kick-off at 9:00 AM. The program will focus on the home landscape, with discussions on lawn management that will include insects as well as disease problems. Home fruit tree management will also be discussed, with insect and disease management as well. A session on calibrating sprayers, as well as a session on laws & regulations will finish up the program.

The program will feature 3 credit hours toward any TDA pesticide license, there is a \$5.00 registration fee that will cover morning refreshments. There will be two more programs in this series, for those that are looking for credit hours, the next session will be held here in Marshall, at the Extension office on Friday, February 8<sup>th</sup> and will feature Dr. Billy Higginbotham, Extension Wildlife and Fisheries Specialist from Overton, as well as Shane Colston, Agronomist with Estes Chemical in Tyler. They will be talking about farm pond weed control and pasture herbicide control updates respectfully. This session will also be worth 3 credit hours toward your pesticide license. There will be a \$5.00 registration fee that will cover a noon chili lunch at the conclusion of the program.

The last program for this series of the pesticide credit hour program, will be held in Longview at the Gregg County Extension office and will feature the “Last Chance” credit hour video series. This will enable participants to earn up to 8 credit hours toward their recertification requirement and will be held on Friday, February 29<sup>th</sup>.

The 2008 East Texas Turfgrass Conference will also be held next month, on Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at the Research & Extension Center in Overton. This annual program will feature 5 credit hours toward any TDA pesticide license. Topics will include; Turfgrass Disease Control Updates, Moles in the Landscape, Turfgrass Stress, Weed Control & Herbicide Update, Overseeding Cool Season Annuals, Bermudagrass Management A to Z and Key Turfgrass Establishment Issues.

There is a \$25.00 registration fee, payable at the door, there is NO pre-registration! Registration will start at 8:00 AM and the program will start at 8:30. As you can see, we have several program slated that will feature CEU's for those that need them for their pesticide license renewal.

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Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.