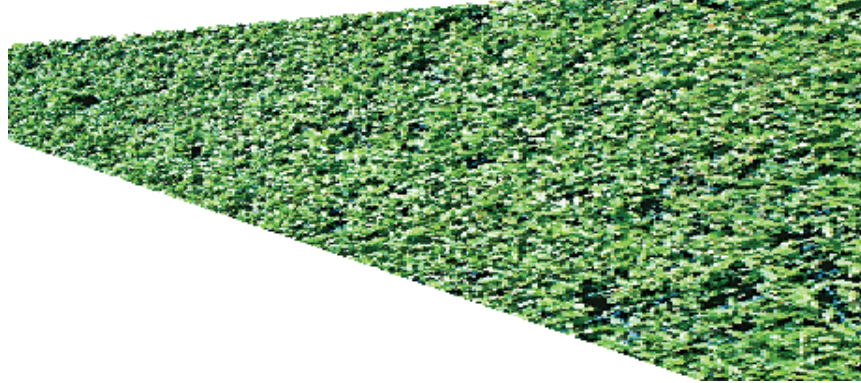


Ray Smith & Associates, Inc.



## PRIVET INSECT ALERT



For the last several years the variety and persistence of scale insect infestations have been notable throughout Long Island. European Fruit Lecanium (which we issued an alert on this summer), Fletcher, Euonymus, Oystershell, Cottony Maple Leaf, Cottony Taxus are among the more common species we have observed. One especially troublesome kind is White Prunicola Scale, implicated in the demise of some valued privet hedges around the South Fork. Infestations have also been seen in lilac, flowering cherries and euonymus as well. We are observing a severe late season build-up of this potentially devastating pest. We can help prevent and manage this serious problem.

Branches, twigs and other plant parts may be attacked. Yellowing of foliage is observed and heavy feeding can result in branch dieback and complete plant mortality. Besides the defoliation and dieback noted with heavy populations, the unsightly numerous powdery white males observed on upper twigs is inconveniently at eye level.

The insect overwinters on the privets (or other host's) bark and are firmly attached, with a hard waxy coating sheltering the insect. The young that emerge in May (as the first generation) are called "crawlers" since they are the mobile forms that disperse over the privet until they select a suitable site for feeding. Their sucking mouthpart is inserted into the vascular system, and the scale remains attached and immobile as plant sap is extracted,

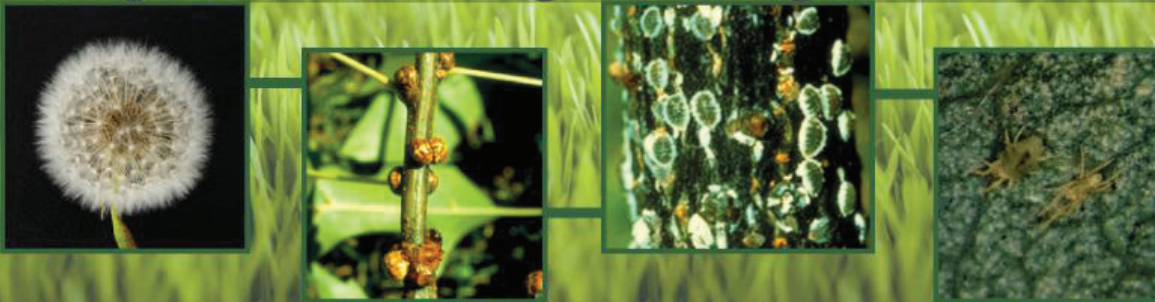
causing the injury. An 'armored' covering is produced as feeding continues (making control more challenging). The second-generation of the pest are present in July. Previously we have had only two generations of this insect here on Long Island, but in warmer years such as this, we are experiencing a late season third generation emerging now in September.

While there is no single reason for this particular outbreak of scale insects, there are some practices which will help win the war.

- Check for existing health of plants; some specimens have been in poor shape well before the scale problem was present. Maintaining vigorous plants helps prevent this problem's occurrence.
- Use renewal pruning to keep fresh, healthy growth & consider replacement in the most severe cases.
- Privet is naturally a vigorous grower so that it needs little nitrogen (newly planted and renovated hedges being an exception). In many areas however, the privet hedges are surrounded by highly maintained (and fertilized) turf. Nitrogen applications are known to enhance buildup. Review the fertilization (nitrogen) program on surrounding turf to reduce run-off into the hedges root zone.
- Properly mulched hedges will be healthier and less prone to infestations.
- Spring deep root fertilization with a product that contains nutrients (other than nitrogen), along with natural bio-stimulants can help maintain plant vigor without promoting excessive growth.
- We suggest a 'power washing' of heavily infested plants during the dormant season before bud break, to clean off scale residue and expose crawlers to treatment.
- Follow up with a well-timed treatment program of Horticultural Oil in late April (to smother the insect) and insecticide applications for each succeeding generation.

For anyone with Privet hedges on your property, contact us to review your current program and hedges. Where not scheduled, additional late season spray treatments may be warranted, but time is running out. Reducing the pest now reduces the insect pressure for next season. Contact us now. We can prepare a full program of both cultural methods and spray treatments for your privet & entire property to protect and enhance your valuable landscape. As always call or e-mail for a complimentary consultation or any questions and concerns.

## Integrated Pest Management Program



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