

# A HEALTHY TREE is a HAPPY TREE

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### Scale

**Description:** There are two types of scale insects – soft and armored. **Soft Scales** secrete a thin, waxy layer over themselves, which cannot be separated from the insect’s body. Because they consume large amounts of plant sap, soft scales excrete a sticky, sugary liquid called “honeydew” as a by-product of their feeding. Honeydew provides the perfect source for the growth of a black mold, called “sooty mold”. Large patches of sooty mold that blackens leaves and stems are often what draw attention to a scale problem. Soft scales range from 1/8 to 1/2 inch in size. **Armored Scales** secrete a hard, lacquered covering over their bodies. This cover is not attached and can usually be separated from the scale’s body. They typically are smaller than soft scale, ranging from 1/16 to 1/8 inch. Armored scale insects do not excrete honeydew and so do not support sooty mold growth.



**Symptoms:** Scale insects obtain food by sucking vital fluids from the host plant, causing yellowing and possibly stunted growth of the affected leaves or needles. A heavily infested plant will have extensive leaf yellowing, premature leaf drop, and possibly branch dieback. A plant weakened by a scale population is often more susceptible to damage by a secondary pest that may ultimately kill the plant.

**Control:** Smothering scale insects by applications of horticultural oil is the easiest and often the most effective means of control. There are numerous types of oils, each with different temperature capabilities and adults. Only the crawler stage is susceptible to contact insecticides. Systemic insecticides may provide control of soft scales, but is generally not effective for armored scales.

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