

Crape Myrtle: Aphid Treatment

The Crape myrtle aphid, *Sarucallis (Tinocallis) kahawaluokalani*, is one of the most common pests of crape myrtles. Crape myrtle aphids are easily distinguishable with pale yellowish-green with black spots on the abdomen. They are small, fragile insects around 1/16 inch long. Winged adults have dark tipped antennae and two double-pronged humps on the back. Crape Myrtle aphids' nymphs resemble wingless adults, but are smaller. Older nymphs have black spikes on the abdomen.

Feeding by Crape Myrtle aphids may reduce plant vigor and cause leaves to distort slightly as they develop. Heavy infestations detract from the aesthetics due to yellowing of the leaves, premature leaf drop, and black sooty mold that results from honeydew production. When crape myrtle leaves are covered in sooty mold, the crape myrtle aphid is the likely culprit.

LIFE CYCLE: CRAPE MYRTLE APHIDS OVERWINTER IN THE EGG STAGE. THE EGGS HATCH IN APRIL, AND FOR THE REST OF THE GROWING SEASON CRAPE MYRTLE APHIDS GIVE BIRTH TO LIVING YOUNG. THE YOUNG APHIDS MATURE IN ABOUT 10 DAYS. THERE ARE MANY GENERATIONS PER YEAR! THE LAST GENERATION OF FEMALES LAY EGGS THAT OVERWINTER. CRAPE MYRTLE APHIDS LAY THEIR EGGS ALONG THE FLANGES OF CRAPE MYRTLE TWIGS.

CRAPE MYRTLE APHIDS ARE MONOPHAGOUS, MEANING THEY ONLY FEED ON ONE PLANT SPECIES AND THUS WILL NOT MOVE FROM CRAPE MYRTLE TO OTHER PLANTS IN THE LANDSCAPE. CRAPE MYRTLE APHIDS FEED BY INSERTING SLENDER MOUTHPARTS INTO LEAVES AND SUCKING OUT SAP THAT IS RICH IN SUGARS. AS THEY FEED, APHIDS ALSO INJECT SALIVA. THIS SALIVA CAUSES PALE YELLOW SPOTS ON THE LEAVES. SINCE APHIDS CONSUME LARGE QUANTITIES OF PLANT SAP, THEY EXCRETE SWEET, STICKY LIQUID CALLED HONEYDEW. WHEN APHID NUMBERS ARE LARGE, HONEYDEW OFTEN COMPLETELY COATS LEAVES AND OTHER OBJECTS BELOW, GIVING INFESTED PLANTS A STICKY OR VARNISHED APPEARANCE. HONEYDEW ATTRACTS ANTS, FLIES, WASPS AND OTHER INSECTS. BLACK, UNSIGHTLY FUNGI CALLED SOOTY MOLD OFTEN DEVELOPS IN HONEYDEW, CAUSING THE PLANTS TO BE LESS ATTRACTIVE.

***Pro Tip:** Aphids tend to be more problematic when trees have excessive nitrogen, so avoid overfertilizing.

Treatment Options:
Timing: As aphids appear

Product	Treatment Type	Rate
Acephate 97 UP	Foliar Spray	8 oz. per 100 gal. water
Abamectin 0.15 EC	Foliar spray	8 oz per 100 gal. water
Imidacloprid 2F	Foliar Spray	1.5 oz. per 100 gal. water
Imidacloprid 2F	Soil drench	0.3 oz. per inch of DBH
Vivid II Injection	Injection	Every 6"

*For heavy infestations: The incorporation of Core-Tect tablets after initial treatment will help with residual control. Rate: 2-3 tablets per inch of trunk diameter.

