



Honeylocust Spider Mites

Honeylocust and Black Locust



What are Honeylocust Spider Mites?

Honeylocust spider mite, *Platytranychus multidigituli*, is a warm season mite that causes a bronzing discoloration on honeylocust trees, by feeding on the underside of the leaf surface. Drought stressed honeylocust are attacked most often. During midsummer, honeylocust spider mite populations build rapidly. Early leaf drop can occur in July and August with heavy infestations, which can lead to other insect and disease problems.



Photo, top right: Spider mites are not really insects, instead they are more like spiders, as evidenced by their eight legs. (Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org) **Top left:** Leaflets will begin to look spotty, eventually turning yellow. (Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org) **Above:** Severe infestation can cause the entire tree to turn yellow or brown, often causing dieback.

Biology

Honeylocust spider mites have multiple generations per year. Adults lay eggs in early to mid-spring. Eggs hatch at bud break on honeylocust, or when common lilacs are in bloom. Crawlers feed throughout the summer, maturing in as little as four days. As cooler temperatures develop, adult females overwinter in bark cracks.

Susceptible Trees

Honeylocust and black locust.

Signs and Symptoms

- White to yellow stippling occurs on the upper leaf surface.
- Heavy infestations can cause browning of the foliage and early leaf drop in July and August.
- Mites can be seen on the underside of the leaflets when using a hand lens.

Honeylocust Spider Mites Treatment Strategies



From left to right: *Lepitect™* is a fast acting soil applied miticide that will provide control within 7 days. One pouch treats 50 inches of trunk diameter for honeylocust spider mites. *Forbid™ 4F* is a foliar sprayed miticide that is applied in the late spring to early summer to control honeylocust spider mite. A *hand pump sprayer* like this one is used to apply spray products like *Forbid™ 4F*.

Treatment Strategy

Spider mites are attracted to trees that are stressed, so the most effective treatment strategy is to support tree health through cultural practices, as well as helping the tree with its defense system using targeted miticides.

Watering

Adequate water is a key factor in maintaining healthy trees. A slow, deep watering event once every few weeks during dry conditions will help maintain soil moisture levels and minimize the stress that invites spider mites.

Mulching

Mulch is very beneficial for all trees because it reduces competition with turf and moderates soil temperature and moisture levels. The addition of 3 inches of wood chips or shredded bark out to the drip line can have a very beneficial effect by holding in moisture and promoting healthy fibrous roots.

Miticides

With the introduction of soil applied systemic insecticides, the treatment of spider mites has become much easier. Historically, a spray application of a miticide such as *Forbid™ 4F* was required to get an infestation under control. *Forbid™ 4F* applications can be made just after bud break in the spring; however, treating large trees can be a challenge. Spray drift and contact with non-target insects has convinced many professionals to move on to soil applied systemic insecticides, such as *Lepitect™*. *Lepitect™* works very quickly, often in as little as three days, and will last for 30 days in the tree. Applications should begin as buds are swelling in the spring. A follow up treatment may be required as these mites can be active throughout the warm summer season.



DIY Shopping List



Option 1:



**Application Type –
Soil drench,
Soil injection**

DIY Product/Equipment Needed

- Lepitect™**
- Measuring or diameter tape
- Gloves
- HTI Soil Injection Kit

Timing

Begin applying just before bud break. A second application is often required 30 days later to maintain control.



Option 2:



**Application Type –
Foliar spray**

DIY Product/Equipment Needed

- Forbid™ 4F**
- Hand pump sprayer with wand
- Gloves/Safety glasses

Timing

Apply just after bud break or as activity is visible.

