

Lace Bugs (Family: Tingidea)

The major plant-feeding lace bug species include *Stephanitis* spp. and *Corythuca* spp. *Stephanitis* spp. are primarily pests of broad-leaved evergreens, whereas *Corythuca* spp. are pests of deciduous trees and shrubs.

Identification

Adults vary from 1/8 to 3/8 inch in length, depending on the species. Their thorax and forewings have numerous, semitransparent cells that give the body a lacelike appearance. The wingless nymphs are smaller and usually dark colored with spines.

Lifecycle

Lace bugs develop through three life stages: egg, nymph, and adult. They have several generations a year. Females insert tiny, oblong eggs in leaf tissue on the underside of the leaves and cover them with dark excrement. Nymphs develop through multiple growth stages before maturing into adults. *Stephanitis* spp. overwinter as eggs in the crevices of leaves and bark or similar protected areas while *Corythucha* spp. species overwinter as adults.

Damage

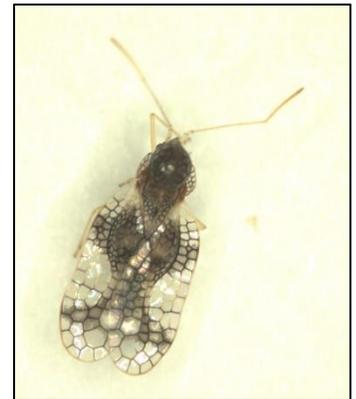
Adults and nymphs are usually found on the underside of leaves. They feed by sucking fluids from plants' photosynthetic tissues. This causes pale stippling and bleaching that can become obvious on the upper leaf surface by mid to late summer. Adults and nymphs also stain leaves with specks of dark, varnish-like excrement. Mites, thrips and other types of true bugs produce similar symptoms. Mite infestations usually can be distinguished by the absence of dark excrement and sometimes by the presence of their cast skins and fine silken webbing.

Control

Certain plant species growing in hot, sunny locations are more likely to be damaged by lace bugs. For example, azaleas grown in partial shade experience less damage than when they are grown in locations more exposed to direct sunlight and higher temperatures. Provide adequate irrigation and appropriate care. Spraying the young nymphs off the leaves with a strong jet of water from a garden hose in spring is a preferred, nonchemical control because the nymphs rarely make it back to the plant before they die. Lace bugs also have several natural predators, such as green lacewings, that help minimize the population, and using these non-chemical controls will ensure that those beneficial insects are not killed. Prompt removal of leaves and twigs under plants can remove overwintering pests and help limit the chances of re-infestation.

References:

UConn Home and Garden Education Center Lace bug Fact Sheet: <http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/FactSheets/lace-bugs.php>
 Cornell Cooperative Extension Lace bug Fact Sheet: <http://ccenassau.org/resources/lacebug>



Lace bug adult

Photo: Jennifer Dacey, UConn



Lace bug nymphs

Photo: Paul Bachi, Bugwood.org



Feeding damage to azalea leaves

Photo: Jennifer Dacey, UConn

Prepared by Jennifer Dacey M.S., Nursery IPM Program, University of Connecticut