

## Scale Insect Control on Crapemyrtle, Practical Considerations.

Dr. Carl Whitcomb, Lacebark Inc. Stillwater, OK



Scale insects on crapemyrtle, *Lagerstroemia indica* and hybrids, are a current problem / concern with nurserymen and landscape managers ---- I offer the following advice:

We no longer have access to systemic insecticides which were especially effective in controlling scale insects. Currently it appears that imidacloprid / sold as Marathon, Mantra and other names will control the insect temporarily when properly applied. Spraying on this insecticide has minimal systemic action and is short lived, however, when applied as the 1% granular to the soil and watered in-- longevity and effectiveness in the plant tissue is much longer.

Therefore, focus on the vulnerable stage of the insect by using the soil applied granular. Adult females on plants lay large numbers of eggs under the scale shell soon after she attaches. As eggs hatch, the young nymphs or crawlers emerge from under the female's protective scale as they have legs and are mobile. **Do not underestimate the mobility of the crawlers.** Left solely to their own devices, movement is short distances but these crawlers are very small and light weight and may briefly attach to insects, or legs of birds, and can be blown in the wind to adjacent plants. These three factors likely account for the rapid spread of the insect.

Because of the hitch-hiking feature of the crawlers, it is important to treat crapemyrtle plants currently showing pres-

ence of the scale insect and to treat adjacent plants as well, even though no scale are currently visible.

In my work advising nurseries around the world, when the question arises "we are having problems controlling scale insects" --- the advice that consistently has been effective is shorten the spray interval or use a soil applied systemic granule. Crawlers of crapemyrtle scale appear to have a very short period of movement before they set up shop in a new location. And once the young insect is no longer a crawler and begins the scale covering, it is no longer vulnerable to sprays of current day "soft" insecticides.

How often to continue to reapply the 1% Marathon granules remains unknown at this time. However if upon removal of part of the females white scale cover, pink eggs or crawlers can be seen with magnification, reapply the 1% granules.

Crapemyrtle bark scale can be controlled and spread minimized or eliminated provided timely repeat soil treatment.

(Dr. Whitcomb does not take phone calls. For inquiries, please submit email to [carl@lacebarkinc.com](mailto:carl@lacebarkinc.com).)