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Noticing Early Populations of Spider Mites Will Help with Control Measures

The two-spotted spider mite is a common pest of many landscape and nursery plants. Adult two-spotted spider mites are small, arachnids with dark spots on each side of their bodies. They feed on the phloem on the underside of foliage, causing a speckled appearance. They will construct a web where all the life stages develop and are well protected.

The plant nutrients allow these mites to multiply rapidly. If large numbers of mites are feeding, the foliage will turn yellow and the leaves will drop. Heavy infestations can even cause death to the plant. New generations will continue to develop until cool weather occurs, leading to a reduction of activity.

Some Control Options:

Non-Chemical Controls:

There are many predators of the two-spotted spider mite that can be introduced or conserved, such as the minute pirate bug, big-eyed bug, green lacewing, and a variety of predatory mites such as *Galendromus occidentalis*, *Phytoseiulus persimilis*, and *Neoseiulus californicus*. Some predatory mites require high humidity levels, so are more effective indoors.

Chemical Controls:

Some options include dormant oils for use in the fall to early spring to kill eggs and dormant adults. Some other options include insecticidal soap, bifenthrin, cypermethrin, or a combination of imidacloprid and bifenthrin. A thorough, repeat application of insecticides to the underside of the foliage is needed to gain control.



Twospotted spider mites, *Tetranychus urticae* Koch. Photo by: University of Florida

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