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Beware of the Two-Spotted Spider Mites

The two-spotted spider mite is a common pest of many landscapes and potted 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. The foliage will turn yellow and their feeding may cause the leaves to drop. Heavy infestations can even cause dehydration and death to the plant.

When drought conditions exist, spider mites tend to attack stressed plants. The plant nutrients allow these mites to multiply rapidly. New generations will continue to develop until cool weather occurs, leading to a reduction of activity.

Some control options:

Biological control:

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 Control:

Some options include insecticidal soaps for use in the summer, dormant oils for use in the fall to spring to kill eggs and dormant adults. Some other options include 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.



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