

LOOK OUT FOR

Sycamore Lace Bug (*Corythucha ciliata* (Say))



Adults and nymphs



Adult



Nymphs



Above: Sycamore Lace Bug. A new insect species for Australia.

What is it?

The exotic insect Sycamore Lace Bug, *Corythucha ciliata* (Say) was detected in Sydney, NSW in March 2007. This is a new record for Australia. The Sycamore Lace Bug is a native North American insect that feeds on sycamore trees and plane trees. The bugs feed on the undersides of the leaves, initially causing a white stippling that can eventually progress into chlorotic or bronzed foliage and premature senescence of leaves. In cases of severe infestations, trees may be defoliated in late summer. Several consecutive years of severe lace bug damage, combined with other stress factors, may kill the trees. Heavy infestations are more common in urban areas than in natural settings. Damage is more severe during dry weather. The Sycamore Lace Bug occurs throughout the eastern USA and in eastern Canada and is common in most of the places that sycamores grow in Florida.

Where did it come from?

The Sycamore Lace Bug was discovered in Europe in 1964 in Padova, Italy. Since that time, it has spread through much of southern and central Europe. In northern Italy, the Sycamore Lace Bug is associated with two fungi, which, in combination with the lace bug, cause decline and death of the trees. It is suspected that the lace bugs may serve as vectors for these fungi.

In addition to damaging trees, the Sycamore Lace Bug has become a major nuisance in Europe, as sycamore is a very popular shade tree in parks in southern Europe. The Sycamore Lace Bugs are particularly bothersome in open air bars and cafes that are shaded by sycamore trees. They also may invade homes in large numbers

Symptoms

All life stages occur together on the underside of leaves on sycamore. The upper surface of infested foliage becomes marked with white to yellowish and later brown speckles. The underside of infested leaves become marked with black varnish-like excrement spots and cast skins of previous developmental stages often remain attached to infested leaves. Leaves desiccate and the tree may prematurely defoliate.

Spread

- Sycamore Lace Bugs overwinter as adults, either under loose bark of the trees, or in nearby cracks and crevices. They are extremely cold tolerant. The flying wings of adults are very delicate, however, adults have been found to be very mobile. Supported by wind they can fly over many kilometres. The majority of long distance distribution occurs as a result of human activity.

Management

- In North America, there are several parasites and pathogenic fungi that attack Sycamore Lace Bugs, but these seldom reduce populations enough to prevent significant damage to sycamore trees in Florida's urban areas. Although a wide variety of insecticides and associated methods of application (e.g., foliar sprays, trunk injections, soil treatments) are available for use against Sycamore Lace Bugs, these are costly, and efficacy is often marginal. Additionally, there are problems associated with large scale use of insecticides in urban areas.

Hosts

- The major host of the Sycamore Lace Bug overseas is the American sycamore tree, *P. occidentalis*. Other *Platanus* spp. may also be affected. Sycamore Lace Bug has been found on a range of *Platanus* spp. in NSW.

Significance to Australia

- This insect has been found across the Sydney Central Business District, Glebe and as far north as Brookvale and south to Wollongong. Damage is relatively severe with very large numbers of lace bugs present in all trees inspected. Further research is required to investigate the lace bug fungal association.

Reference

Halbert, S.E. 2001 and Meeker, J.R.. Sycamore Lace Bug, *Corythucha ciliate* (Say) Insecta: Hemiptera: Tingidae

Contact

The public are encouraged to assist in developing a better understanding of the distribution of the insect in Australia.

If you suspect you may have found Sycamore Lace Bug, contact your local Department of Agriculture or Primary Industries by calling the national free call hotline on 1800 084 881.

Report suspect detections to your local department of agriculture or primary industry, call the

EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE

1800 084 881

For more information:
www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/pesthotline

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Above: Sycamore Lace Bug damage on *Platanus* species. Photo by Whitney Cranshaw.

Prepared by:

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