

RHODODENDRON LACE-BUG

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Rhododendron lace-bug, *Stephanitus rhododendri*, is a fairly common pest of certain Rhododendrons. It is, however, rarely diagnosed correctly. It is our opinion that the symptoms may appear to many as a drought related or nutritional and thus rarely is brought to plant clinics. The other presumed reason as to why we don't see it commonly in plant clinics is that there is an apparent host plant preference. One may find a planting of several Rho varieties or species in close proximity and only one will be consistently infested with the bug, suggesting clear preference or conversely varietal/species resistance to the pest.

Lace-bugs (Fig. 1.) are very distinct small insects appearing to be covered in fine netting. Their damage is typical of a sucking pest. As they feed on the undersides of the leaf, a light stippling occurs (Fig. 2.) on the upper surface of the leaf. In time, this will appear bronzed. The lace-bug itself may appear on the underside along with blackish tar spots (fecal material) stuck to the leaf (Fig. 3.) It appears that there is but one generation per year (Fig. 4.) This conclusion is based on the second authors' observations at the Puyallup Research and Extension Center in 1985.

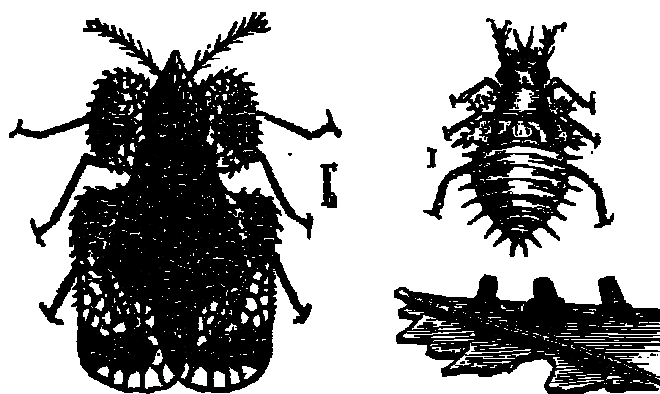


Fig. 1. Lace-bug –adult, eggs, and nymph
(After Comstock, United States Department of Agriculture)

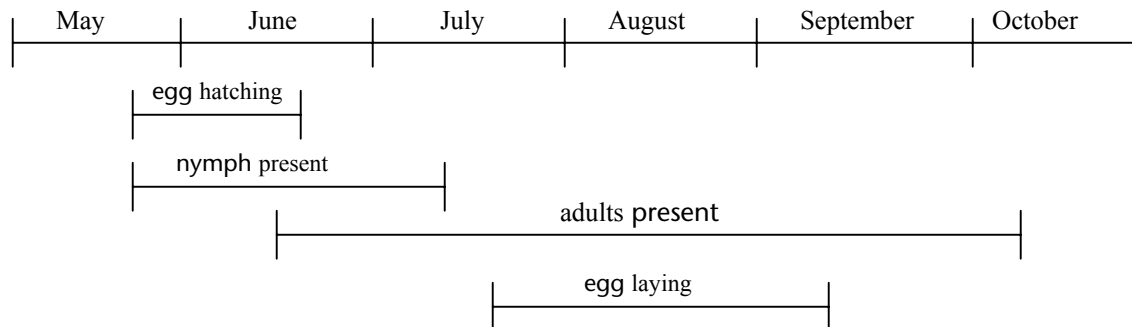


Fig. 2. Stippling of Rhododendron leaves



**Fig. 3. Fecal material stuck to the leaf (Note:
lace-bug in the center)**

Fig. 4. Life cycle chronology of the Rhododendron lace-bug *Stephanitis rhododendri* at W.W.R.E.C., 1985.



When management becomes necessary, apply strategies when nymphs and/or adults are feeding. Both chemical and non-chemical methods can be assessed on the web at <http://pep.wsu.edu/Hortsense/>. This listing on HORTSENSE has been updated recently. It also links to a Trade name/active ingredient listing.

REFERENCES:

Byther, R.S., C.R. Foss, A.L. Antonelli, R.R. Maleike, and V.M. Bobbitt. *Landscape Plant Problems-A Pictorial Diagnostic Manual*. MISC0194, 2002, 157 pp.