

Pest Profile



Photo credit: (left) Forest and Kim Starr, Starr Environmental, Bugwood.org; (Right) Tracy Wootten, University of Delaware, Bugwood.org

Common Name: Azalea Lace Bug

Scientific Name: *Stephanitis pyroides*

Order and Family: Hemiptera, Tingidae

Size and Appearance:

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg	0.36-43 mm	The eggs of the azalea lace bug are oval, or flask-shaped, and are white in color. Eggs of the lace bug are laid in the midrib on the underside of the leaves and are covered with a dark brownish adhesive material.
Nymph	0.1-1.8 mm	The nymphs are colorless when they first hatch; however, they soon turn black in color and become spiny. The nymph goes through five instars, and the wing pads can be seen after the fourth molt.
Adult	3 mm	The adults are cream-colored and have netted lacy wings that are marked with black and brown patches. The wings are held flat over the body, with the outer margins extending beyond the body outline. There is a characteristic hood that can be seen with the use of a hand lens.

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): The adults and nymphs have piercing-sucking mouthparts.

Host/s: Azalea lace bugs are associated with landscape plants and broad-leaved evergreens. They are somewhat host-specific by feeding on evergreen azalea and deciduous varieties.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults): The nymphs and adults cause damage by the piercing of leaf tissue and removal of cell contents. Since this kind of feeding removes most of the chlorophyll-containing tissues near the upper epidermis, the leaf becomes stippled, bleached, silvery or chlorotic. Adults and nymphs can also foul leaves with specks of dark varnish like excrement which can also drip onto pavement or other plants below infested ones. Normally lace bug feeding is not a serious threat to

plant health or survival; however, this type of feeding injury can be more damaging to evergreen azaleas, making the azalea lace bug a key pest to this plant. Feeding can cause premature leaf drop in some species and a modest reduction in plant growth rate. In avocado, leaves dropping off prematurely can lead to sunburn of some fruit and a subsequent reduction in yield. The adult females significantly cause more feeding injuries to plants than do the male adult or nymph stage due to females feeding more on plants than nymphs and adult males.

References:

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