



### **Chrysanthemum Lace Bug**

Recently, I was walking around a landscape planting I had done last year and noticed some of the asters were looking a little unhappy. The foliage was slightly yellowing, but I didn't think much of it because it was after quite a few rainy days. I checked on them again this last weekend, and found they had declined much more – to the point where I'm questioning whether they're even still alive! Looking at the foliage from a slight distance, the plants look brown and crispy – as I would expect after a hot, dry spell with no irrigation. However, I knew there had been adequate rainfall, and supplemental irrigation when needed.

Upon further inspection, the culprit was found – tiny insects barely 1/8" long. They were greyish-white with light brown mottling, and would fly away when disturbed. The asters were covered with them! With more investigating, the mums which are just getting ready to bloom were covered with them as well, but the foliage had yet to show symptoms.

These little pests were Chrysanthemum Lace Bug. Lace bugs are pretty tiny, about the size of a gnat, and are rarely found in numbers high enough to cause noticeable damage. It's cousin, the Sycamore Lace Bug is fairly common, but again is rarely damaging enough to warrant treatment.

Chrysanthemum Lace Bug, both the adults and nymphs feed on the foliage of chrysanthemums, asters, goldenrod, and occasionally rudbeckia. Their feeding first shows up as yellowing of the leaves, or even yellow stippling, similar to the damage done by spider mites. Older leaves are usually attacked first, and over time, the yellowing turns brown and can cause plant death. The eggs of the Lace Bug are usually found to be hatching in late May, and the adults can feed through September. Early treatment with carbaryl (Sevin) can take care of the problem. Just remember it may also affect beneficial insects as well!

Even though this insect might not be one of the common pests of the area, if you have any of the plants listed above that are susceptible, it would be a good idea to check for signs of insect feeding. Look on both sides of the leaves for discoloration. It might be easier to spot their eggs, which are usually on the undersides of leaves, black in color, and found in groups. Or brush your hand over a plant and look to see if there are any insects fly up when disturbed. Early detection is key to controlling the damage the Lace Bugs could do. They are also a good thing to check for as we're moving into fall and mums and asters are so common in stores now. Make sure you bring home healthy plants!

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