

A Bug's Life

Kermes scale

Over 30 species in the family: Kermesidae

Fun facts

- No visible head or legs
- Sucking mouthpart hidden under protective covering, resemble galls
- Feed on plant sap and secrete sticky honeydew

Host plants

- Red oaks: Pin oak, red oak, black oak
- White oaks: Bur oak, post oak, and others

Identification

Damage: Sticky honeydew, sooty mold fungi, branch dieback, tree decline, flagging or brown, wilted leaves when tree is stressed

Crawler: $1/32$" long, rust colored

Adults: up to 1/4" long, look like brown, speckled and textured marbles attached to branch tips and twigs, does not move

Management

- Effective insecticidal treatment is dependent on tree and crawler activity
- Pin oak crawlers active September
- Bur oak crawlers active April and June
- Treat crawlers with contact insecticide like horticultural oil (organic option), synthetic pyrethroid, or acephate
- Soil applied systemic insecticides (Imidacloprid) in fall for spring control

