

Problem: Spruce Spider Mite (*Oligonychus ununguis*)



Host: Spruce

Description: The spruce spider mite (*Oligonychus ununguis*) is quite small; about the size of a pollen grain. Symptoms include bronzing and yellowing of needles and may show up later than damage actually occurs. To test for an infestation, tap a branch while suspending a white sheet of paper underneath. Specks that move are probably spider mites. Most active during the spring (March - mid-June) and fall (September - October), these cool-season mites spend the summer as eggs.

Recommendations: Control can be challenging because the dense growth of these plants makes it difficult to reach all the interior portions of the plant with the miticide. This dense growth also interferes with one of the oldest mite control techniques; a strong spray of water. Mites can literally be knocked off an infested plant if hit with enough force. Unfortunately, effective pesticides are limited. Mites are more closely related to spiders than insects and therefore many insecticides are ineffective. A strong spray of water applied three times a week for two weeks may be all that is needed. Note that horticultural oils can damage spruce, especially Dwarf Alberta Spruce and should not be used.

References:

1. [Spruce Spider Mite](#), Missouri Botanical Garden

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