

# Forest Pest Bulletin



SOUTH DAKOTA  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
DIVISION OF RESOURCE  
CONSERVATION & FORESTRY



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## THE SCURFY SCALE

### CAUSAL AGENT

*Chionaspis furfura*

### HOSTS

Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), Crabapple (*Malus*), Apple (*Malus*), Pear (*Pyrus*), Currant (*Ribes*), Gooseberry (*Ribes uva-crispa*), Mountain ash (*Sorbus*), Willow (*Salix*), Dogwood (*Cornus*), and Hawthorn (*Crataegus*).

### SYMPTOMS

Trees or shrubs affected by the Scurfy scale grow poorly and may suffer branch dieback. Tree death is possible, yet unlikely, as a symptom of this scale. The scales themselves are very small grayish white insects that are 1/8-inch-long and can be found on branches or twigs as small bumps (Fig. 1). To check for scales, flip over suspicious bumps on branches with a thumbnail. If the bark sticks to the bumps, this usually signifies a scale infestation.



Figure 1. Adult scales (white) and crawlers (black).  
Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, [www.forestryimages.org](http://www.forestryimages.org)

### LIFE CYCLE

After the scale eggs hatch in June, the newborn crawlers disperse to nearby leaves, branches, or trunks to feed. As the crawlers feed, they excrete a clear, waxy shell as armor. After maturing in August, the newly-winged males crawl out from under their waxy armor, and mate with armored females. The females produce about 100 reddish purple eggs each, which are laid underneath their shells. The scales die, and the eggs overwinter under the shells. The scales have one to two generations per year.

## MANAGEMENT

Scales tend to thrive on trees that are under stress. Keep trees healthy with watering and other tree care methods. Because scales are immobile, they are very susceptible to biological controls. Ladybird beetles (Fig. 2) and wasps are common natural predators of the scales. These predators help keep scale populations low, and less damaging.

Apply a horticultural oil or Dinotefuron when the crawlers begin to move in late May. Oil can cause damage to trees if sprayed during high temperatures so be sure to read labels. Acephate may also be used but will kill beneficial insects as well.

Due to numerous pesticide labels and/or label changes, be sure the product label includes the intended use prior to purchase or use. Please read and follow all pesticide label instructions and wear the protective equipment required. Spraying pesticides overhead increases the risk of exposure to the applicator and increases the likelihood of drift to non-target areas. Consider the use of a commercial applicator when spraying large trees due to the added risk of exposure and equipment needs. The mention of a specific product name does not constitute endorsement of that product by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture.



Figure 2. Ladybird beetle.  
Jim Occi, BugPics,  
[www.forestryimages.org](http://www.forestryimages.org)

For further information contact your nearest South Dakota Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry office. Hot Springs 605-745-5820; Lead 605-584-2300; Mitchell 605-995-8189; Pierre 605-773-3623; Rapid City 605-394-2395; Sioux Falls 605-362-2830; Watertown 605-882-5367.

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