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# Plant Feeding Mites

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## Spider Mites

Spider mites are insect relatives that damage plants by sucking juices, usually from the leaves. These mites have eight legs, except, as very young "larvae", at which time they have only six legs, much like insects. They never possess wings. Some species produce noticeable webbing. There are many overlapping generations. Their feeding causes chlorosis and ultimately leaf or needle drop when populations are high.

**Some important species:**

**Two-spotted spider mite and relatives,** *Tetranychus* sp. (Fig. 1): Yellow to red-brown mites. Often a distinctive spot on each side of the body is present. Most often a problem on indoor plants. Attacks a wide variety of plants.

**Spruce spider mite,** *Oligonychus ununquius:* Feeds exclusively on conifers and thrives under hot, dry conditions. Causes severe chlorosis of the needles (Fig. 2). Needle drop is common. Heavy webbing may also occur.

**Fig. 1. Two-spotted spider mites. By L.K. Tanigoshi.**

**Spider Mite Management:** Current miticide recommendations may be obtained from the WSU Hortsense website: http://pep.wsu.edu/hortsense/ Insecticidal soaps are only effective against spider mites when used repeatedly. Some of the registered insecticides are also labeled for spider mite control, however, they may only suppress mites for a time, or the mites may be resistant. Many of these products can also damage beneficial predatory mite populations. Follow label directions.

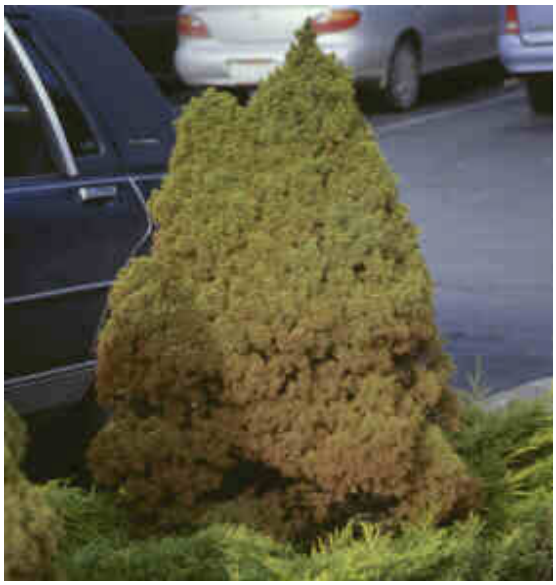

**Fig. 2. Needle chlorosis caused by spruce spider mite. By R.R. Maleike.**

# Eriophyid Mites

Eriophyid mites (Fig. 3) are very tiny, generally microscopic mite-like creatures that resemble little torpedoes with only two pairs of legs. They are highly host specific and can often be diagnosed solely on the type of damage they do to their hosts. Most overwinter on their hosts and often within or near the buds of their host. There may be many overlapping generations each year. Some important species include the following:

**Maple bladder gall mite** (Fig. 4), *Vasates quadripedes*: Cause the growth of bladder-like galls, first green, then red, then black, 1/8 to 1/4 inch long on upper side of leaf.

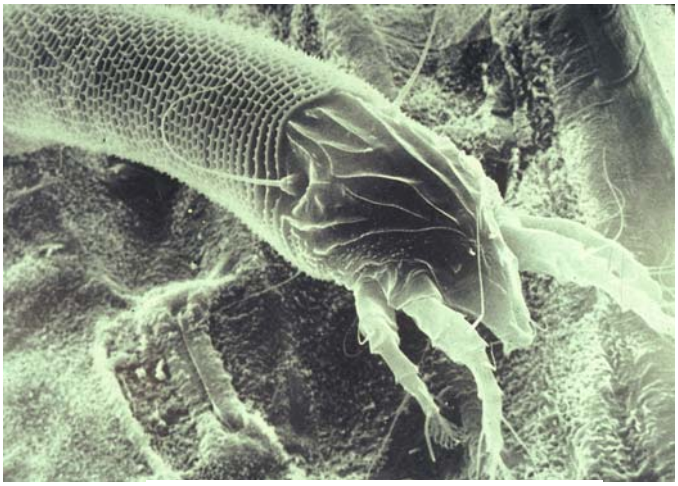

**Fig. 3. An eriophyid mite. By USDA**

**Fig. 4. Maple bladder gall mite galls. By K. Grey**

**Pine eriophyid mites** (Fig. 5), *Triseticus* sp.: Feed in needle sheaths causing yellowing and distortion of new needles. Needles may die and drop off. Repeated attacks may ultimately cause tree death.

**Fig. 5. Pine eriophyid mite damage (top); bottom twig is uninfested. By R.S. Byther**

Refer to Hortsense for management recommendations.