Boxwood spider mite

Eurytetranychus buxi
Order Acari, Family Tetranychidae; spider mites
Introduced pest

Host plants: Common, English and European boxwood

Description: Adult mites are minute and tan-colored with long front legs giving them a somewhat spider-like appearance. Immatures are smaller, but otherwise similar. Eggs change from light yellowish to dark yellowish brown as they mature.

Life history: Eggs of the first generation hatch in May. Mites feed on both upper and lower leaf surface. There are several generations a year.

Overwintering: Eggs on the underside of leaves.

Damage symptoms: Adult feeding causes leaf stippling which may vary from yellow to brown depending upon the severity of the infestation. In serious cases premature leaf drop occurs.

Monitoring: Monitor both upper and lower leaf surfaces in spring and summer for the presence of tan-colored mites. Also look for eggs in winter on the undersurface of leaves showing stippling.

Cultural control: Japanese boxwood seems to be less susceptible and might be substituted for more susceptible boxwood.

Chemical control: A dormant horticultural oil spray on leaf undersurfaces will destroy eggs. Light infestations in summer can be controlled by oil or soap sprays. Heavy infestations may require residual miticides.

Biological control: Natural predators of mites include bigeyed bugs, minute pirate bugs, lacewings, predatory mites, lady beetles, the rove beetle, *Oligata oviformis,* and predaceous midges.

Plant mortality risk: Low

Biorational pesticides: abamectin, bifenazate, clofentazine, hexythiazox, horticultural oil, insecticidal soap, pyridaben

Conventional pesticides: bifenthrin, carbaryl, deltamethrin, dicofol, fenbutatin oxide, lambda-cyhalothrin

Stippling damage caused by boxwood spider mites. (25)
Photo: John Davidson

Boxwood spider mite adults and yellow eggs on underside of a boxwood leaf. (26)
Photo: John Davidson