

# Spruce Spider Mites

## TREE DOCTOR TIPS

### Spruce Spider Mites (*Oligonychus unuguis*)

#### DESCRIPTION:

Ranging in color from green to orange-red, spruce spider mites are conifer-loving pests that overwinter as orange eggs at the base of needles and twigs. After hatching and molting several times, the adults mate and lay eggs. There can be six to eight generations each season, depending on temperature. The spruce spider mite is most active during the cooler temperatures of spring and fall, and may discontinue its feeding and reproductive activity when temperatures rise during the summer months.

#### HOSTS:

Spruce spider mites feed on more than 40 different types of conifers, especially Alberta spruce, as well as arborvitae, fir, hemlock, juniper and other spruce species.

#### BIOLOGY AND SYMPTOMS:

These sap-sucking pests deprive trees of nutrients, causing their needles to fleck and turn yellow. Signs of a worsening infestation include remnants of silk webbing and shed skins, as well as brown needles, premature needle drop, and branch or tree death.

#### MANAGEMENT:

Unless treating sensitive dwarf Alberta spruce or Colorado spruce, apply an appropriate miticide before bud break to reduce overall populations and again in late fall if necessary. Talk with a certified arborist about alternative treatments when miticides cannot be used.



FIGURE A. SPRUCE SPIDER MITES, WEBBING ON SPRUCE

FIGURE B. EGGS OF THE SPRUCE SPIDER MITE, CLOSE-UP

*The scientists at **The Davey Institute** laboratory and research facility support our arborists and technicians in diagnosing and prescribing based on the latest arboricultural science. For specific treatment and application details, your arborist may consult *The Davey Institute PHC Handbook*.*

