Pepper Tree Psyllid

DAVEY Institute

TREE DOCTOR TIPS

Pepper Tree Psyllid
(Calophya schini Tuthill*)*

DESCRIPTION:

A member of the insect family commonly known as "jumping plant lice," the pepper tree psyllid sucks sap from trees, leaving a discolored and sparse tree canopy.

HOSTS:

The pepper tree psyllid exclusively affects California pepper trees. The pepper tree psyllid has quickly spread around the state of California, beginning with its original detection in Long Beach. Today, pepper tree psyllids can be found throughout California's entire coastal region.

BIOLOGY AND SYMPTOMS:

Pepper tree psyllids suck sap from trees, creating circular brown pits and a slight leaf curl. The insects attack in winter and early spring, so the first signs of damage appear around the start of the growing season. Infested tree leaves turn a grayish-green color on the bottom surface and the tree as a whole looks as if it has lost leaves. In severe cases, pepper tree psyllids slow tree growth and cause major discoloration or leaf loss.

MANAGEMENT:

Pepper tree psyllids have a number of natural predators that help with pest management. Often, just after damage has occurred, beetles or wasps hunt the pests. One way to help ease potential stress from an infestation is to give trees a thorough spring cleanup at the start of the season. Because psyllid eggs rest in tree beds during winter, raking and disposing of fallen leaves early in spring can eliminate the pests before the eggs hatch. Alternately, consult a professional arborist about chemical treatment options. A spring insecticide may effectively control the pest before it impacts trees. Your arborist can recommend how often treatment will be needed to help control pepper tree psyllids.

A

B

FIGURE A. YOUNG, NEWLY EMERGED PEPPER TREE PSYLLID
(Photo credit: James Bailey)

FIGURE B. SIGNS OF PEPPER TREE PSYLLID DAMAGE ON LEAVES
(Photo credit: robertsiegel@stanford.edu)

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.*