



Red Orchid Scale a vanilla orchid leaf.



Red Orchid Scale

Common Name: Red Orchid Scale
Scientific Name: *Furcaspis biformis* (Cockerell), Diaspididae

Red orchid scale was first noticed in Jamaica and Trinidad in Central America and is now established in the continental United States, Hawaii, Guam and Saipan. This is an armored scale and primarily a pest of orchids, particularly cattleyas, dendrobiums, and vanilla. The adult females are the most identifiable forms. They have a cover (shield) that is circular, moderately convex and dark reddish brown. The male cover is smaller, oval, and reddish brown. The female remains at one location while the male develops wings and leaves the cover when it matures. The females produce offspring called crawlers which are very small and have no cover. The crawlers move around to new suitable locations. They may spread to neighboring plants by wind. Once crawlers begin to feed, they develop a covering.

Scale insects feed by inserting their stylets into the plant tissues and sucking the sap. These insects are difficult to control with chemicals due to the hard waxy covering which covers their body. The crawlers are not protected and are vulnerable to the sprays.

Control:

1. Use good sanitation practices. Do not introduce scale infested plant material into a nursery. New plants should be inspected to be sure that they are pest-free.
2. Treat the plants as soon as the problem is recognized. Consult with an Agricultural Extension Agent for the chemicals registered and the rate and frequency of applications. The control of scale may require frequent spraying. You can contact an agent by calling 734-2575, 734-2579, 734-2518 or 734-4753.

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