

Oklahoma Pest Profile: Lace Bugs

With spring in full force and summer on our doorstep, plants have emerged and exploded with new growth...and so has the insect population. As a gardener who loves trees and shrubs in the landscape, I watch for signs of lace bug damage.



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[Corythucha](#)

What is a Lace Bug?

The lace bug (*Corythucha*, spp.) can be found wherever their host plants thrive - throughout the United States - including Oklahoma. The adults have a rather distinctive presentation; their oval-shaped wings and sculpted body extensions and hood resemble a lacy or filigree texture. Look for winged adult insects that are entirely white, or white with brown or black markings, and black non-winged larvae with back spines.

At only about $\frac{1}{8}$ " , the evidence of their activity might be easier to spot than the actual insect.

The Life Cycle

Just as the leaves of their host plants appear in the spring, the overwintered adults emerge from sheltered areas of their host plant, e.g. under bark or in hidden crevices.

They attach their tiny black eggs to a sticky, brown material on the underside of leaves, where the nymphs hatch within days and begin to feed - sucking fluids from the leaves. The cast skins of the growing nymphs can sometimes be found within the sticky material, as can the excrement (frass). Activity will continue from spring through summer and multiple generations will be produced, each completing the life cycle within 30 days.

Host Plants for Lace Bugs

Fortunately, lace bugs are host-specific. The most common species found in Oklahoma target oak, hawthorn, pyracantha, quince, sycamore and elm.



"Cotton lace bugs (*Corythucha gossypii*)" by Plant pests and diseases is licensed under CC PDM 1.0.

Lace bugs can do extensive damage if the infestation is heavy and uncontrolled. Like spider mites or leaf hoppers, they are sucking insects; the evidence of activity produces white or yellow spots on the surfaces of the leaves.

Prevention and Control

If identified early, light lace bug infestations are not difficult to control. In fact, a stream of water will wash them off leaves and stems, and most often, beneficial insects already present in the garden will keep the population under control. For more serious infestations, consult OSU fact sheet [EPP-7306, Ornamental and Lawn Pest Control](#) for pesticide recommendations. Always read the label and follow instructions carefully whenever using pesticide.

Take Control Today!

Find sound information on lace bugs and their control from the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service and others through the [links at the end of this article](#).

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Resources

[OSU Entoweb: Lace Bugs](#)

[EPP-7306: Ornamental and Lawn Pest Control](#)

[HLA-6408: Landscape Maintenance Schedule](#)

[HLA-6434: Biological Pest Controls for the Home Landscape](#)