# ***Crapemyrtle Bark Scale***

The Crapemyrtle (Lagerstomia indica) has been a longtime favorite ornamental shrub of homeowners as it blooms profusely throughout our very hot summers. The fall color and bark add interest to our fall and winter landscapes.

Do you recall if your crapemyrtles were not looking so great at the end of last fall?

Did the trunks and branches look blackened and the bloom less prolific?

This is Crapemyrtle Bark Scale (CMBS), which diminishes the appearance of these wonderful shrubs. It is a new exotic pest from Asia that has been wrecking havoc on these shrubs throughout the South for the past five years. It is now readily being seen in Oklahoma, especially in Tulsa County. The scale insects deposit honeydew on the trunks and branches, which encourages the growth of sooty mold.

Blackened trunks and branches are detected by homeowners, followed by poor bloom and an undesirable appearance. The appearance of white scale bodies on the bark and a pink liquid exuded when crushed will help to identify it from the crape myrtle aphid - another pest that can cause black sooty mold.

Try to remember if you saw anything like this last year as it overwinters on and around the shrub. As the shrub leafs out this spring, keep a close watch for the scale, as early detection will help you control it. This goes for purchasing a crapemyrtle as the scale can be found in nursery stock as well. The other way it is spread is by wind and insects while in the nymph stage. The scale adult is sessile.

Our recommendation is to scrub the bark with a soft brush and a mild solution of dishwashing soap and water. This will remove many of the female scales and egg masses as well as buildup of black sooty mold on those branches and trunks. Catching it early in the season is extremely helpful, so be on the lookout.

It is too late in the season to now apply horticultural oil. To be effective, it needs to be applied during the winter and recommended for severe infestations. This would be something to consider next winter if you are unable to control it this year.

For further information, please refer to the *Pest e-Alerts* from the Oklahoma State Extension and also Texas A&M Extension *Agrilife.*