



Gloomy Scale

By Eric Day, Manager, Insect Identification Laboratory

Plants Attacked: Primarily red and silver maple; also elm, hackberry, and boxelder.

Description of Damage: The bark becomes roughened and encrusted with scales. Branches and limbs die back and result in a rapid decline in tree vigor, occasionally resulting in the death of trees. Seriously weakened trees are common in Virginia as a result of scale populations, especially red and silver maples.

Identification: The scale cover is circular, dark gray, with a black nipple on dorsum. The underside cover is snowy white. Damaging stage - nymphs and adults. Homoptera: Diaspididae, *Melanaspis tenebricosus* (Comstock)



Gloomy Scale on bark.

Lorraine Graney, Bartlett Tree Experts, Bugwood.org

Life History: Immatures complete development in spring and by early- to mid-June eggs are hatching. These crawlers settle and produce a second brood by late summer to early fall. These immatures overwinter until spring when development is completed. This scale can have two or more generations per year and overwinters as an immature stage.

Control: Spray with dormant oil in late winter. Sprays for crawlers may help, but crawlers emerge over a long period. There is a peak in mid-June, but 2 or 3 sprays at weekly intervals are necessary to obtain only fair control.

Remarks: This scale is very destructive to forest and shade trees.