Ash Flower Gall Mites
FACT SHEET

GREEN DROP Tree Care





What they are:

You may have seen the persistent, brown or blackish, cankerous masses on certain ash trees (Fraxinus species) result from ash flower gall mites attacking the male (staminate) flowers. Most ash trees are dioecious – a single tree will contain either male (staminate) flowers or female(pistillate) flowers. Very rarely will both types of flowers be found on the same tree. Ash flower gall mites infest the male trees as the flowers develop in the spring. These tiny mites, more closely related to spiders than other insects, feed on the blooms, and their salivary secretions affect the tree's hormone production, resulting in the formation of galls.

Symptoms:

These galls, which are large, blackened, abnormal masses, and very unsightly, persist on trees often in excess of a year. Flower gall mites do not appear to affect the health and vigour of infested trees to any great extent. Only in a few extreme cases, when combined with other environmental stress situations, does the ash tree suffer or die. The major criticism of the gall masses is the unsightly appearance they impart to boulevards or yards.

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Prevention:

Recommendations for control include planting only female trees and planting a mix of tree species. Dormant oil sprays seems to be an effective control for trees that are already established. The dormant oil should be applied in early spring, as the buds are expanding, and before the tree's leaves fully expand. Once galls have been formed, some measure of control and reduction of the unsightliness can be achieved by pruning and destroying the affected masses as soon as possible after the infection. This type of pruning is most feasible where only one or a few smaller trees are affected, but is rarely feasible on a large scale.



Contact

GREEN DROP Tree Care

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