

# ***The Landscape Alert***

An Outreach of the UGA Center for Urban Agriculture - [www.gaubanag.org](http://www.gaubanag.org)

## **Southern Red Mite**

**Sources: Kris Braman and Will Hudson, UGA Entomologists**

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See the original publication with photos at <http://lpm.uga.edu/ornamentals/soredmite.html>

Although many mites prefer hot and dry weather, Southern red mite is a cool weather pest of ornamental plants. Southern red mite attacks shrubs and trees from fall through winter and into early spring.

**Adult Southern red mites** are ½ mm long, oval, purplish, or reddish, with eight legs. The red eggs overwinter on the undersides of leaves. There are several generations each year. Most activity occurs in spring and fall. Southern red mites are less active when the heat of summer arrives, but become more active in fall as temperatures cool down.

**Plants affected:** This imported spider mite has a wide host range, but prefers broad-leaved evergreen plants in the azalea/camellia and holly families. It is common on azalea, rhododendron, mountain laurel, holly, Pieris, rose, Viburnum, firethorn, and yew.

**Identifying the problem:** Examine leaves closely for signs of stippling (white flecking) and the various mite stages on the lower and upper leaf surfaces of broadleaved evergreens in early spring and fall. When stippling is noticed, tap leaves over white paper to dislodge and count mites, as well as the beneficial insects and predaceous mites. Predaceous mites have longer legs than the southern red mite and move much faster. Look for red overwintering mite eggs on the lower surface of leaves from November through early spring.

**Control:** Application of a dormant oil to the lower surface of leaves when overwintering eggs are numerous will help reduce spring populations. In light infestations, the use of a horticultural oil or insecticidal soap will control these mites with minimal impact on beneficial organisms. When heavy infestations of mites are present, the application of residual miticides often is necessary. For pesticide recommendations see the *Pest Management Handbook* - [www.ent.uga.edu/pmh/](http://www.ent.uga.edu/pmh/). Look under 'Ornamentals' and then 'Mites.'

**Follow all label recommendations when using any pesticide.**