

Ask An Arborist™ Quick Reference: Honeylocust Plant Bug

A new nemesis: Honeylocust Plant Bug

In the past few years, the honeylocust plant bug (*Diaphnocoris chlorionis*) – which used to only be a problem in areas located south of I-80 – has become a notable pest in Chicagoland. As its name suggests, this insect feeds on the foliage of honeylocust trees (*Gleditsia triacanthos*). All honeylocust trees are a target of the honeylocust plant bug; although yellow-leaved varieties (such as ‘Sunburst’) are more prone to attack.

Due to its small size (adults are only 1/8” long) and clever camouflage, honeylocust plant bugs can be difficult to detect...until you stand near an infested tree. The insects are quite active (not to mention annoying). Just tap an infested branch and you’ll see what we mean. Honeylocust plant bugs cause a considerable amount of damage in spring, when the insects feed on the emerging buds, causing distorted and dwarfed foliage. Heavy infestations can lead to premature leaf drop and excessive sucker shoot growth, leaving your tree weakened and susceptible to other diseases and insect infestations.

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