What are Clover Mites?

K-State horticulture expert shares tips to prevent mites

By Maddy Rohr, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Noticed by their reddish color and long front legs, clover mites are harmless to humans but can be a nuisance. Kansas State University horticulture expert Ward Upham said they can easily invade homes through small openings around windows and doors because they are so small.

“Mites can be removed from inside the home with a vacuum cleaner. Bags should be removed and sealed after use to prevent mites from escaping,” Upham said.

Upham recommends preventing clover mites by using physical barriers.

“Mites do not readily cross loose, clean, cultivated soil, so a band about 18-24 inches wide all around the house, kept free of grass, will help deter potential invaders,” Upham said.

Applying talcum powder, corn starch or baking soda around entry points can also prevent clover mites.

“Even double sticky tape placed on window sills will catch the small mites when they try to pass. Replace the tape when it fills. Do not crush clover mites as they will leave a rusty stain,” Upham said.

Using miticides is also an option to prevent clover mites from entering the home.

“Spray outside walls and foundations with lambda cyhalothrin (Spectracide Triazicide, Scimitar) or bifenthrin (Hi Yield Bug Blaster Bifenthrin, Hi Yield Bug Blaster II, Talstar),” Upham said. “The house should be sprayed from the lower window sill down to the ground.”

Upham suggests paying particular attention to cracks and crevices in clapboards, shingles, foundation and around basement windows.

“Be sure to spray up and into the area between the bottom of the house siding and the foundation,” Upham said.
Upham and his colleagues in K-State's Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a weekly Horticulture Newsletter with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens. The newsletter is available to view online or can be delivered by email each week.

Interested persons can also send their garden and yard-related questions to Upham at wupham@ksu.edu, or contact your local K-State Research and Extension office.

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K-State Research and Extension local offices, https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html

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