FROM THE CASE FILES:
WHITEFLY

Source: Wikipedia Commons

What Are Whiteflies?

Whiteflies are small winged insects that look more like moths than flies. They have a powdery wax which both protects them and is key to identification. Whiteflies can be found in all parts of the world and thrive year round in the south but go dormant during the winter in northern states. Whiteflies often seem to appear from nowhere. If you're working in your garden or with your plants and face a sudden wall of flying white bugs, you've got whiteflies! As soon as you know you have them, you'll want to take action as they multiply quickly.

Can They Cause Harm to My Plants?

Whiteflies can damage your plants. They attack the leaves, buds and stems sucking the juice out of them. Without proper pest control, infested plants might turn yellow, experience stunted growth, and ultimately die. Whiteflies can also produce a honeydew that drips onto the plant. This honeydew encourages the growth of a mold that could infect the plant with a virus leading to the plant's death.

How Can I Treat Them?

Controlling large whitefly infestations can be a challenge because insecticides have been proven to be mostly ineffective. The best way to prevent problems from developing in your garden is by taking proactive steps to eliminate ideal conditions for whiteflies. For plants most commonly affected by whiteflies such as Lantana, DLC experts recommend pruning all blooms by cutting back the first 6 to 8 inches of the stem, then hosing down the plant with water. This washes off any of the honeydew we previously mentioned and gives the plant a better chance of survival.

Other common forms of treatment are:

- Biological control
- Removal
- Mulches
- Traps
- Insecticides

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For additional landscaping tips and articles, please visit our learning center at www.dlcresources.com.

For a complete list of whitefly management solutions, please visit The University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program website at www.ipm.ucdavis.edu