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Plumeria Care Bulletin

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Pests and Diseases: Symptoms and Solutions for Plumeria

Pests and diseases are not as common on plumeria as some other tropical plants, however from time to time an infestation occurs. The following is a brief compilation of pests and disease known to affect plumeria, the symptoms, and possible cures.

Pest/disease	Symptom	Solution
Long horn borer Grub of the longhorn beetle. Lives inside stem and eats plant from inside.	Small hole(s) in side of stalk with black ooze dripping out.	Cut limb from plant and destroy completely!
Spidermites Tiny sucking insects.	Leaves may become mottled and tend to curl under. Small webs may be visible.	Forceful spray of water to affected area. Malathion. Orthene or Insecticidal soap.
Whiteflies Sucking insects.	Small white flies appear on back side of leaves. Honeydew secretion allows for sooty mold growth.	Forceful spray of water to affected area. Orthene or Insecticidal soap. Malathion.
Thrips Small (1/8 inch) insect with scraping mouthparts.	Flowers fail to open, buds fall off. Excessive bleeding from tip especially overnight.	Orthene. Insecticidal soap. Malathion.
Scale Insect that secretes a waxy shell over it's body. Sucks plant juices.	Small round to oval spots on stalks, leaves or tips.	If only a few, dab each with rubbing alcohol drenched Q-tip. Systemic insecticide.
Mealy Bugs Insect covered with white powdery wax, oval, 1/8 inch. Sucks plant juices.	Plants may become weak and covered with honeydew secretion of mealy bug.	If only a few, dab each with rubbing alcohol drenched Q-tip. Systemic insecticide.
Cutworms Larvae of moths.	Base of plant or leaves and flowers appear to be chewed or cut off.	Cardboard shield around base of plant. Diazinon or dursban on soil.
Slugs and snails Gastropods with rasping tongue.	Portions of plant stem appear to have been chewed away. Slime trails near plants.	Diatomaceous earth near base of plants. Pick offenders and destroy. Snail and slug bait .
"Black Tip" fungus	Growing point turns black stopping further growth. Normally occurs only in spring.	Use fungicide early. If fungus persists, the tip needs cut back to clean wood.
Rust (<i>coleosporium dominguense</i>) and others. Fungus.	Reddish orange pustules on the underside of leaves.	Fungicide with bayleton, benomyl or oxycarboxin. Broad spectrum fungicide. Remove badly infected leaves.
Powdery mildew Fungus.	Whitish mold on leaves.	Increase air circulation. Broad spectrum fungicide.
Black sooty mold Fungus.	Black mold on leaves. Normally caused by secretions of aphids, whitefly or thrips.	Rid plant of pest(s). Broad spectrum fungicide.

Always follow the manufacturers recommended application rates. Many chemicals are on the market that may be substituted for those mentioned above, however some chemicals will burn or otherwise disfigure plumeria foliage. Sprays should never be applied during the heat of the day in bright sunshine. If in doubt about the possible harmful effect of a chemical, either check first with an authority on the subject or spray only 1 or 2 leaves of the affected plant and wait a few days to see if there is a reaction.

References to trade names and commercial products are made with no discrimination or endorsement intended by The Plumeria Society of America.