



FYN Garden Q & A Series

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Yards & Neighborhoods



FYN Topic: Chilli Thrips Damage 40 Host Plants

Question An insect has infested my viburnum hedge. Newer leaves and flowers look curled and scarred with irregular brown markings. What is it and how can I prevent further damage?
Steve, Cape Coral

Answer: Sandankwa viburnum (*Viburnum suspensum*) is a good choice for a slow growing, clipped hedge on a property border. Viburnums here usually stay pest-free. Occasionally, aphids, mites and white-fly becomes problems producing sooty mold. None of these pests cause long-term health problems and can be left untreated.

One exception is a newer pest to Florida known as chilli thrips (*Scirtothrips dorsalis*). First detected in Florida in 2007, chilli thrips feeds on over 40 different host plants by damaging young leaves, buds and fruits. These are extremely small insects. Adults are less than 2 mm (0.08 inches) long with a pale, narrow body and dark wings. Chilli thrips often go undetected. They feed by rasping (rubbing) emerging new leaves and breaking down plant tissues that eventually ooze plant sap. Damaged new leaves curl upwards, looked distorted, distended and scarred and the leaves fall off. Heavily infested plants may become stunted and lose all their leaves.

Several different systemic insecticides can be applied as a foliar sprays. Thrip damage is generally not present on older leaves. In the spring, pruning infected branches reduces the symptoms by stimulating new, un-infected growth. Learn more about their control at: <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/Hort/GardenPubsAZ/ChilliThrips.pdf>.

Useful Links

<http://www.floridayards.org>
<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>
<http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>
<http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>



Chilli thrips damage on Sandankwa viburnum.
Photo: Stephen Brown, Lee County Extension

Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 239-533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. or by emailing Extgardener@leegov.com. Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>.

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