



CMBS reduces bloom and overall beauty. Crapemyrtle on the left was treated while tree on the right was not. (J. Robbins, Univ. of Arkansas)



Imidacloprid is an insecticide commonly used to treat CMBS. It's available in different concentrations and price points. Always read and follow label directions.



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Healthy crapemyrtle



Crapemyrtle infested with CMBS



# CRAPEMYRTLE BARK SCALE

*How to Protect Your  
Crapemyrtles*





## New Insect Threatens Crapemyrtles

An invasive insect, known as Crapemyrtle Bark Scale (CMBS), has been identified on crapemyrtles in the West Tennessee area. This relatively new pest was first noticed in Dallas several years ago and has been working its way northeast. An unchecked infestation may not kill an otherwise healthy crapemyrtle; however, the pest stresses the plant to the point of affecting vigor, bloom quality and appearance.

CMBS is the only bark scale known to occur on crapemyrtles at this time and can be easily identified. CMBS appears as white, felt-like encrustations on the bark, often near pruning wounds or branch crotches. As the infestation increases, you will notice black sooty mold: a fungus on the bark, leaves, and surrounding area. The mold grows on the waste excreted from the insect. Once the scale is eliminated the sooty mold will go away.

## Four Options to Control the Spread of CMBS in Your Neighborhood

**\*During the growing season, applying a systemic insecticide to the root zone has shown good control, especially when applied between April & July.** Insecticides containing imidacloprid are recommended when applied according to label directions. This application provides 12-month control.

**\*A winter application of dormant oil to the bark may be helpful.** Thorough coverage is necessary for positive results. Apply November - March before leaves appear.

**\*Wash the trunk and reachable limbs with a soft brush and a mild solution of water and dishwashing soap.** This will remove most scale, eggs, and black sooty mold, and increase the effectiveness of the insecticide treatment.



Sooty mold gives the appearance of black limbs on an infected plant.

You may clean the trunk with a power washer using the least amount of pressure that is needed to remove the scale. Overly aggressive washing will damage the crapemyrtle's bark making it more susceptible to insects and disease.

**\* The total removal of infected plants is recommended if you are unable or unwilling to treat your crapemyrtle.** The scale will spread to nearby crapemyrtles if left untreated. Infected plants should be disposed by burning or placed in the trash.