

# Cordyline

## How do I know if my Cordyline is affected by Spider Mites?

Spider Mites look like tiny dots on the underside of your plant leaf. They usually live in large groups, so you will definitely see more than one of these tiny dots in a group on the plant. Spider Mites are known as such from the silk webbing that they leave behind on infested leaves. This presence of webbing is the best indication that your plant may be infested. Another good indication that your plant might be infested with this pest or another is by studying your plants leaf. If you begin to notice the leaves are covered a lot of yellow pin pricks that may be a good indication.



Spider mites usually become a problem on outdoor plants after certain insecticides have been sprayed that may have killed the natural enemies of the mite. The best thing to do when dealing with Spider Mites is to find an insecticidal soap that you can use to wipe down the leaves. It is advised that you test out the insecticidal soap on a small portion of the plant before applying it to the whole plant. For indoor plants the best course of action is to remove or isolate the plant from the home to minimize possible spreading to other nearby plants. If only a small portion of the plant is infested, clip that section and dispose of the clippings. If the entire plant is infested and the plant holds no sentimental value best thing to do is dispose of the plant. If you want to try and save the plant do not waste your time with pesticides as they usually won't have any effect on this pest. Treat the plant with an insecticidal soap every couple of weeks to help kill or keep the mites in control.

## How do I know if my Cordyline has Mealybugs?

Mealy bugs are white, waxy creatures that live in large colonies usually on the undersides of the leaves and/or around leaf joints. The bug is about 1/10th of an inch and has the look of cotton. Similar to other pests a sure sign that your plant is infested is if you observe that the leaves of your plant seem dry or weak (dropping).



## How do I get rid of them?

If you notice those signs the first course of action would be to isolate the infested plant from all other plants within your home. After that use a strong spray bottle with water in order to try to wash off the colonies from your plant, or wipe off the infestation with cotton buds dipped in rubbing alcohol. Take note that this may not work to get rid of all the Mealybugs at one time, so keep the plant away from others while you monitor it for more insects. Another option is to buy the Mealy Bug's natural predator called the Mealybug destroyer (*Cryptolaemus montrouzieri*) which is a species of lady bug. This is an option for heavily infested plants, but is probably not practical unless you have a large number of infested plants. Once the Mealybugs have been killed and consumed the Mealybug destroyer will die off from a lack of a food source.

## **Does my Cordyline have Fungus Gnat?**

The adult fungus gnats are gray or dark-gray, fly-like insects about 1/8 inch long. They are attracted to light and when present in your house, swarm over the windows because of the natural light. The immature form of the Fungus Gnat, which lives in the soil, are thin whitish maggots with a jet black head, and attain a length of about 1/4 inch. The maggots are likely to be found in soils with quantities of decaying plant. The damage caused by these pest's are usually occur while they are in their maggot form as they will bury themselves in the soil and feed on the roots of the plant. The gnats themselves are more of a pest then an issue to the plant.

## **How do I avoid Fungus Gnats?**

Best way to keep your plant free of fungus gnat maggots is to avoid overwatering your plant. In the event that your plant is already infested with this pest, use an insecticide drench and apply it to the potting to control the problem. For the adults use of a labeled and targeted insecticide should assist in destroying them. If you want to avoid the use of chemicals to kill the larvae, by allowing the soil to dry out completely between watering they should die out.

## **How do I know if my Cordyline is infected by Scales?**

There are many species of scales that are commonly found in indoor house or greenhouse plants. Some species of the insect can have an armored shell like covering that will protect its entire form while others will have none at all. Those with the waxy shell can have its protection removed by simply scraping it away. It is easiest to tell the difference as the soft scales (no armored protection) produce honeydew while the armored scales will not. Scales feed on your plant by sucking on the plant's sap. This will promote poor growth which will eventually stunt the growth of your plant. It can also lead to your plant being infested to sooty mold.

The most practical thing to do for your first attempt at cleaning up your plant from its infestation is to use soap and water to wash off the leaves and stems. If your plant is heavily infested, you can try an insecticide spray schedule on your plant that involves 2 to 3 sprays a week every two weeks. It is usually best to discard the plant however before the infestation can spread.

## **How can identify if my Cordyline has Thrips?**

There are many sub species of Thrips that can infest common indoor house hold plants. The insect is barely visible to the naked eye. In its adult form the pest is a brownish, black color with light markings on its body. The larvae can be a light yellow to orange color with black excrement on their backs. When a plant that this pest inhabits is disturbed the adult forms it can be seen to fly or run. This insect will feed on the juices of the plants leaves and/flowers. The damage that is left behind is random streaked silvered areas of the plant that are speckled with little black dots of excrement. The plants leaves and/or flowers may be blotched or drop away from the plant.

Labeled insecticides that state they can handle thrips are the best option for removal. Try a daily spray of 4 times a day for 4 days on both the plant and the soil to get rid of this pest.

## **Is my Cordyline suffering from a Potassium Deficiency?**



Sample Image

Symptoms that your Cordyline is suffering from a lack of Potassium will be apparent when tiny yellow blotches develop on the older foliage. Yellow spots will appear on the leaves that are almost completely translucent. In some cases this is followed by the leaves rolling and giving a burnt or dead look from the tips inward. As the problem persists it will make its way from the older leaves into the younger leaves until the plant is dead. The best way to take care of this problem is to find a fertilizer that contains Potassium Sulfate. This should bring the color and life back to the new leaves on the plant.

## **Is my Cordyline suffering from a Magnesium Deficiency?**

Sample Image

Magnesium deficiency is more common on the older leaf's on the greener varieties of Cordyline. If you notice orange/brown veins on the leaves accompanied by severe yellowing, those would be some of the first indications. This is further identified with withering or curling of the leaves which will eventually lead to the burnt look around the tips of the leaf. The best/organic way to treat this deficiency is to take Epsom salt and mix it in with about 2 gallons of water. After doing so take a spray bottle and gently mist the plant a couple of times a week.



## **Does my Cordyline have Phyllosticta Leaf spot?**

Phyllosticta leaf spot will sometimes show up on your Cordyline. It is noticeable by the yellow irregularly shaped areas that will form on both sides of the leaf. This usually occurs to areas of the plant that are exposed to heavy overhead watering. The best way to counter this spotting issue is to Spray Daconil Fungicide on both the top and underside of the plants leaves.