

Insects

White Fly/Aphid

By Dotty Hurd WACONIAH 2009

A client had just called to ask about her bougainvillea. She stated that the plant is looking sickly and has insects on the underside. This bougainvillea is about 10' tall and quite the specimen for the Boise area. We brought it inside for the winter months and I'm certain the insects were hibernating in the soil and have broken dormancy in the warmth of a semi-greenhouse condition. While the treatment for white fly and aphid are almost the same, the insects are quite different in appearance.

Aphids are small, soft-bodied insects in a wide array of colors from green to black. White Flies **are small winged insects which look more like moths than flies.** They have a powdery wax which protects them and is the key to identification. Plants infected with white fly and aphid respond to frequent drenches of insecticidal soap and sticky fly traps. Be sure to spray the entire leaf both the underside and the top. Be prepared to lose some leaves especially if a yellowing has begun. By the time the leaves start to yellow, the insect has sucked all of the sap out of the leaf.

If you are unsure of aphid or white fly, shake the plant. If it is white fly, a swarm will fly about. If its aphids, you might see some ants on the plant. Ants will farm the aphids as a source of food. The ants do not eat the aphids, but suck on the honeydew made by the aphids as they suck the sap from leaf of the plant. When bringing plants from outside to inside for the winter months it is a good preventative measure to treat for insects whether present or not. I am certain these insects were in the soil.