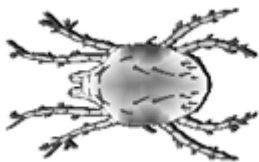


## **Section XVII. – Pest Descriptions**

These are examples of common pests found in Lawrence Parks.

### **Spider Mites**



Spider mites are classed as an arachnid. They are small and often difficult to see with the unaided eye. Their colors range from red and brown to yellow and green, depending on the species of spider mite and seasonal changes in their appearance.

Spider mites are common plant pests. Injury to plants is caused as they feed, bruising the cells with their small, whip like mouthparts and ingesting the sap. Damaged areas typically appear marked with many small, light flecks, giving the plant a somewhat speckled appearance. Severe infestations, leaves become discolored, producing a gray or bronze look to the plant. Leaves and needles may ultimately become scorched and drop prematurely. Spider mites frequently kill plants or cause serious stress to them.

### **Moles**



The mole is classified as a mammalian not a rodent. It has an average length of 5.5”-6”. The mole has large powerful front feet designed for pushing soil out of its way. It also has a short sparsely haired tail about 1.5” long.

A moles diet consists primarily of earthworms as well as insects that it finds among the plant roots. These include mole crickets, beetle larvae, ants, and moth larvae among other things. In this fact and the fact that a mole’s tunneling helps to aerate the soil, moles are beneficial.

However, mole tunneling may cause physical damage to the root systems of plants, may kill grass, and in the sports turf industry, is a serious safety concern because mole tunnels can cause ankle injury to players.

### **Bagworms**



Bagworms are the caterpillar stage of a moth that is rarely seen. Only the males develop into typical moths able to fly. The adult female is grub-like and remains inside the bag until just before she dies. The bag created by the caterpillar is made by whatever type of vegetation is being consumed. The bags reach a maximum size of 1.5” to 2 “. When the bags reach their maximum size they are permanently suspended from twigs on the plant, and transform into the pupa stage of becoming an adult. Bagworms have to ways of spreading from plant to plant. They can spin threads of silk and be carried distances by the wind, or they are capable of moving short distances by crawling.

Bagworms feed primarily on arborvitae trees, but also feed on spruce, juniper, white pine, elms, maples, and other shade trees. They cause damage to trees in their larvae stage by feeding on the needles of evergreens, and on the leaves of deciduous trees.

The damaged caused is mostly an aesthetic issue but heavy infestations can cause death to younger trees.

When attempting to control bagworms. The size of the area infested is a determination. If it is a small area the bagworms may be controlled by handpicking them off the infested trees. This needs to be done before the eggs have hatched.

## Aphids

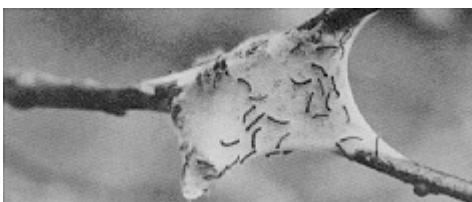


Adult aphids are pear shaped 1/32" to 1/8" with 2 short tubes projecting backward from the abdomen. They have long antennae. Their bodies can be green, pink, black, dusty, gray, or white with a fluffy coating. Aphids may or may not have wings.

Aphids are soft bodied insects that use their piercing sucking mouth parts to feed on plant sap. They usually occur in colonies. Heavily infested leaves can wilt or turn yellow because of excessive sap removal. Saliva injected into plants can cause leaves to pucker and become severely distorted. On a mature plant Aphids are generally just an aesthetic problem. In younger plants heavy infestations can cause plant death.

Early detection of an aphid colony is key to reducing infestations. Examine the bud areas or undersides of the leaves for the colonies.

## Tent caterpillars



The tent caterpillar in the larvae form is black and hairy with a white stripe down the back. On the insects sides there will be blue spots located between two yellowish lines. Larvae are 2" to 2.5" long. Adults are yellowish tan to brown moths with 2 narrow, diagonal stripes across wings.

Eastern tent caterpillars are commonly found on wild cherry, apple, and crabapple. They also will feed on ash, birch, black gum, red gum, willow, witch-hazel, maple, oak, poplar, cherry, peach, and plum. Tents are constructed in forked branches of trees. They leave the tent to feed on trees and then return when they are done. They can defoliate entire branches on large trees inhibiting growth and weakening the tree causing it to be more susceptible to other insects and diseases. In the case of smaller trees they can defoliate the entire thing in a matter of days. Overtime this can lead to the death of the tree.

## Grubs



White grubs are c-shaped larvae of a large group of beetles called scarabs. The larvae form of white grubs is thick bodied, creamy-white with brown head capsules and short legs. These larvae grubs are the form usually found in turf.

Grubs eat organic matter including the roots of plants. The damage first appears to be drought stress. Heavily infested turf first appears off color, gray-green, and wilts in the hot sun. Continued feeding will cause the turf to die in large irregular patches. Tunneling of the larvae causes the turf to feel spongy. If the larvae alone are not enough to cause turf damage; skunks, raccoons, opossums, and moles will ruin the turf digging in search of grubs to eat.

## Lace bugs



Adult lace bugs are about 1/8"-1/4" long with a netlike pattern on the wings. The wings are dotted with brown and black. The eggs are identifiable by their cylindrical shape. They resemble small black smoke stacks on the underside of the leaf.

Lace bug damage is first noticed as yellow spots on the upper leaf surfaces of affected plants. They actually feed on the undersides of leaves with their piercing-sucking mouthparts, but because they kill surrounding cells as they feed, they cause the yellow spots to appear on upper sides of the leaves. The spots that appear are similar to mite damage but much larger. When there is a heavy infestation the leaves take on a gray blotched appearance or will turn totally brown. Lace bugs also produce varnish-like dropping that spot the underside of the leaves.

## **Leaf rollers**

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Leaf roller larvae are green, slender and will reach about 2/3" in length. Leaf rollers overwinter as a pupa in debris on the ground. Adults emerge in early spring and lay eggs in groupings on the underside of larger limbs. The eggs hatch at about bloom. The hatched larvae then roll leaves together with webbing and feed on foliage.

Leaves are rolled and tied together with silken threads to form hiding places. While inside the larvae feed on the new leaves giving them a ragged appearance. In years of severe populations trees can be completely defoliated. The larvae also will fall to the ground on their silken threads and can defoliate other plants underneath the tree or even the grass. Even when trees are completely defoliated, healthy trees can be expected to recover. Only in cases of severe infestations occurring multiple seasons in row could this insect cause death.

## **Yellow necked caterpillars**

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Yellow necked caterpillars are closely related to the Walnut caterpillar. Caterpillars are yellow and black striped and covered with soft white hairs. The head is black and the segment just behind the head is bright orange-yellow. The remainder of the body is marked with four longitudinal yellow stripes with black in between the markings. Full grown larvae are about 2" long.

Yellow necked caterpillars feed in masses. They are commonly found on Crabapples, Oaks, and Walnuts. These insects can go unnoticed for a period of time, but as their size increases so does their feeding. They can seemingly defoliate a tree overnight. A healthy mature tree should have no problem leafing back out again after an infestation. If a younger tree is defoliated repeatedly it could likely cause death.

## **Other Urban Pests Found in Kansas**

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Ash/lilac borer  
Mealybugs  
Scale insects  
Sawflies  
Fall webworms  
Norway rats