

# RUGOSE SPIRALING WHITEFLY

## also known as Gumbo Limbo Spiraling Whitefly

### a New Whitefly in South Florida

#### A Guide for Homeowners

This new whitefly is a large, slow moving insect capable of infesting a wide range of landscape plants such as:

- gumbo limbo
- banana
- black olive
- mango
- palms
- some shrubs such as copperleaf, cocoplum, wax myrtle, and other plants



*Adults on the underside of a palm leaflet.*

**But DON'T panic.** This whitefly is different from the ficus whitefly. So far, the Rugose Spiraling Whitefly is not causing severe plant damage such as plant death or severe branch die-back.



*Eggs are laid in spirals.*

**What to look for:** white spirals and a build-up of a white, waxy substance on the underside of leaves. This coats the eggs and immature whiteflies. If populations build up greatly, infested plants can become covered with the white, waxy substance. This can sometimes become weakened and also be disfigured by the black sooty mold that grows on the insect's excrement (referred to as honeydew). The sticky honeydew can accumulate on cars, pool decks and patio furniture from infested trees overhead. Honeydew does not damage paint. Once the insect is under control, the sooty mold and honeydew will disappear.

**Management:** as soon as you see the white spirals, you need to do one of the following:

**Small plants** - thoroughly wash plants off with a strong stream of water. Follow-up with insecticidal soap or horticultural oil sprayed once a week for 3-4 weeks. Repeat as needed.

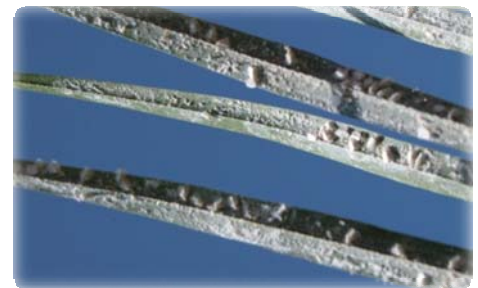
**ALWAYS FOLLOW LABEL DIRECTIONS. The Label is the Law.**

**Larger plants and ornamental trees; heavily infested ornamental plants** - thoroughly wash plants off with a strong stream of water. \*You may want to consider using a systemic insecticide (labeled for whitefly control in landscapes) that can be applied to the soil as a drench, as a granule, or as a tablet. Systemics may take several weeks to be effective for large trees but are VERY long lasting (9 - 12 months).

A list of insecticides is on the other side of this page.

**ALWAYS FOLLOW LABEL DIRECTIONS. The Label is the Law.**

\*Tip: If you have many heavily infested plants, you can purchase professional strength, non-restricted use insecticides. This may be more cost effective compared to the homeowner version of systemic insecticides. Or hire a professional landscape pest control company with experience controlling whiteflies in the landscape.



*Underside of an infested palm frond.*

**Fruit trees** - call your County Extension office for recommendations since most pesticides are not labeled for tropical fruit trees. See management suggestions for small plants listed above. Whiteflies can be wiped off banana leaves with a cloth.

**The tables below list insecticides labeled for homeowner use against whiteflies (plants and trees EXCEPT fruit trees). These are available at garden centers, retail nurseries, and hardware stores.**

**Contact** (sprayed directly onto the pest. These are least-toxic, less harmful to natural enemies of pests and to the environment.)

| Trade Name(s)   | Active Ingredient             | Chemical Class |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------|
| BioNeem (Bonide);<br>Neem Oil (Green Light, Southern Ag);<br>Rose Defense (Green Light) | Neem oil                      | Botanical      |
| Organocide;<br>Ultra-fine Horticultural Oil (Sunspray and others)                       | Paraffinic oil, vegetable oil | Biorational    |
| Insecticidal Soap (various brands)  | Potassium salts               | Biorational    |

**Systemics** (usually applied to the base of the plant as a soil drench and very long lasting. Less harmful to natural enemies of pests.)

| Trade Name(s)   | Active Ingredient | Chemical Class |
|---|-------------------|----------------|
| Tree & Shrub Insect Control with Safari (Green Light)   | Dinotefuran       | Neonicotinoid  |
| Tree & Shrub Insect Control (Bayer Advanced, Ortho Max);<br>Tree & Shrub Protect and Feed (Bayer Advanced);<br>and other products | Imidacloprid      | Neonicotinoid  |

**Others** (some may harm natural enemies of whiteflies.)

| Trade Name(s)  | Active Ingredient  | Chemical Class  |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|
| Flower, Fruit & Vegetable Insect Killer (Ortho)  | Acetamiprid        | Neonicotinoid   |
| Bug-B-Gon Max Lawn & Garden Insect Killer (Ortho)                                      | Bifenthrin         | Pyrethroid      |
| Rose & Flower Insect Killer (Bayer Advanced);<br>Lawn & Garden Insect Killer (Schultz) | Cyfluthrin         | Pyrethroid      |
| Triazicide Once & Done Insect Killer (Spectracide), liquid                             | Lambda-cyhalothrin | Pyrethroid      |
| Malathion (various brands)   | Malathion          | Organophosphate |
| Indoor/Outdoor Broad Use Insecticide (Hi-Yield)  | Permethrin         | Pyrethroid      |
| Yard & Garden Insect Killer (Bonide);<br>Rose & Flower Insect Spray (Spectracide)      | Pyrethrins         | Botanical       |

### For more information

Visit our website at <http://monroe.ifas.ufl.edu> and click on the "Rugose Spiraling Whitefly" link or contact the UF/IFAS/Monroe County Extension office at (305) 292-4501.



Prepared by: A. Hunsberger, Urban Horticulture Agent & Entomologist, UF/IFAS Miami-Dade County Extension, and Dr. Catharine Mannon, Entomologist, UF/IFAS TREC.  
Reviewed by T. Olczyk, UF/IFAS Miami-Dade County Extension Director, Nov. 2010.  
Photo credits: M. Gutierrez and H. Glenn, UF/IFAS TREC.

The use of trade names in this publication is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. UF/IFAS does not guarantee or warranty the products named, and references to them in this publication does not signify our approval to the exclusion of other products of suitable composition. All chemicals should be used in accordance with directions on the manufacturer's label. Check the label carefully as this information does change and our publications may not have the latest information. Use pesticides safely. Read and follow directions on the manufacturer's label.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. For more information on obtaining other extension publications, contact your county Cooperative Extension service.  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A. & M. University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Millie Ferrer-Chancy, Interim Dean.