

**Insect control** - Over the years many organic products have been introduced for the control of insects, many of these products have proven to be less effective than others. The two products that I have found to be the most beneficial for me are *Soybean Oil and Orange Oil*. (Both of these products are mixed at *1 oz. per gallon of water.*)

Lace bug is the number one pest found on Azaleas in Houston. To avoid population of this insect from infesting your azaleas several precautions need be taken.

Always avoid planting azaleas in full sun. It has been my observation that Lace bugs prefer a plant in the full sun. This may be because that plant is usually stressed resulting in conditions which natural defenses can not overcome, such as sap flow or thickness of cell walls.

Stressed plants weather in the sun or the shade attracts lace bug. It is just as important to fix the reason why the azalea was stressed as it is getting rid of the Lace bug. Simple removing the insect will only solve your problem temporarily; the lace bugs will be back.

The lace bug will lay their eggs on the leaves of the azaleas to over winter. To prevent future lace bugs from eating the azalea remove the leaves from beneath the plants to decrease populations in the spring.

These three suggestions should help to prevent damaging population on your azaleas. As an organic gardener it is important to realize that you may always have some insects on your plants. By taking precautions in the beginning you will control the problem insects for the long term.

**Fungal Control** - Fungi is more of a problem than insects at times. I have had many different experiences with the fungi that use Azaleas as a host.

I had a small outbreak of Lace Bugs on a group of azaleas in the Clio Garden. So I fixed a sprayer full of *K-neem Oil* and sprayed the azaleas with the problem. Several days later I returned to spray the same azaleas with a fungicide to get rid of the Powdery mildew and the rust. Much to my surprise the rust had vanished and the mildew was a lot less noticeable. I had found an organic solution to some of my fungi problems. I now spray *K-neem Oil* only for fungi and no longer for insect control. Other things that I have found to work are *Corn Meal* for *Phytophthora Root Rot*, and a Milk dilution for *Petal Blight*. Most importantly remember that a healthy soil will control most fungi problems so you don't have to.

These recommendations are what we use at Bayou Bend and are by no means the

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