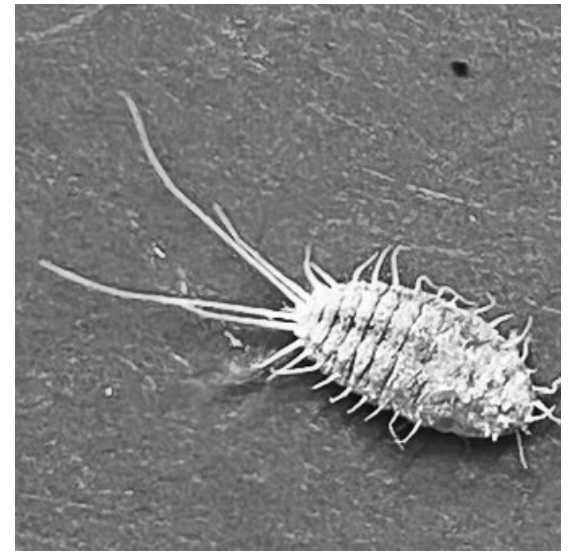




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Orchid Pests

Orchids are not prone to many pests, but here is a guide to the few that are most commonly seen and how to deal with them. Regularly checking your plants and being vigilant will keep problems at bay.



MEALY BUG: This white, fluffy insect is commonly seen on Phalaenopsis, around the flowers and under the leaves. Use a small brush dipped in methylated spirit to clean the whole plant including under the rim of the pot. Remove infested blooms and treat the plant with a systemic insecticide such as Provado that will kill the insects when they suck the plant's sap. Also a good idea to re-pot into fresh bark.

RED SPIDER MITE: These microscopic mites love warm, dry conditions so keep the humidity up. They are seen on as a silvery coating mainly on the undersides of the leaves. Wipe and mist the leaves regularly. Spraying with a systemic insecticide will also help to eradicate this debilitating pest. It can occur on Phalaenopsis and also a slightly different 'false red spider mite' can cause pitting on their leaves.

SCALE INSECT: These brown, round pests are related to the mealy bug and due to its hard, waxy coating, is quite hard to kill. Gentle scrubbing with a small brush and meths removes the most visible ones but for those that remain hidden a systemic insecticide is the only answer.

APHIDS: Greenfly are the most common aphid seen with orchids, especially on buds, flowers and new leaf growths. Wash them off immediately with mild soapy water and check regularly to prevent reoccurrence. The aphids produce a sugary substance which can drip onto the leaves so wipe this off to prevent mold. Warm weather increases their numbers when they can come in from the garden.



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