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RESISTANT VARIETIES OF HONEYSUCKLE TO HONEYSUCKLE APHID

Tatarian honeysuckle (Lonicera Tatarica) has been a popular shrub species to plant in Nebraska for wildlife and windbreak plantings. However, the popularity and usefulness of this variety is rapidly declining in Nebraska and throughout the Midwest due to the rampant spread of a new insect from Eurasia, the honeysuckle aphid, Hyadaphis Tataricae.

This insect feeds on the sap of the new twigs causing stunting of plant terminals and lengthwise folding of new plant leaves (upperside in). A good symptom to look for is the formation of witches' brooms on the terminal shoots. These form by the development of a large number of shoots clustered on a shortened twig. The clusters of dead twigs and leaves remain attached to the plant throughout the winter. Reinfestation will take place below the old witches' broom next spring. Virtually all tatarian cultivars are susceptible to this aphid.

Resistant Varieties

Research done by North Dakota State University has indicated there are varieties (cultivars) of honeysuckle species that are resistant to honeysuckle aphid damage. Amur, Clavey's Dwarf and 'Arnold Red' are very acceptable honeysuckle cultivars to plant for windbreaks with very little damage by this aphid reported.

Amur honeysuckle has replaced tatarian honeysuckle in the shrub species grown and distributed within the Clarke McNary program in Nebraska. It would be a good shrub to plant for wildlife and aesthetic (leeward rows) due to its fruit and fall colors. Amur honeysuckle and the other varieties mentioned should be considered over tatarian in the future.

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In residual plantings of tatarian honeysuckle that are aphid infested, pruning and destroying the witches' brooms is highly recommended if practical. It is best to remove the witches' brooms before the plants leaf out in the spring. Only the deformed terminals need to be removed. It is not necessary to prune the whole bush to the ground.

Systemic insecticides can be used to control this insect more effectively than contact insecticides because this insect feeds inside the folded leaves. Many applications may be needed. In addition, aphicides pose a threat to flower-pollinating bees and berry-eating birds.

References

- 1) Honeysuckle Aphid--Can it Ruin Your Windbreak?
Publication by USDA, ASCS Hancock County, ASCS
office, 110 E 3rd, Garner, IA
- 2) NDSU Lonicera (Honeysuckle) Evaluation and Varietal
Recommendations, Dale E. Herman and Larry J. Chaput