



GARDEN *pests* IN PERTH

Lilly Pilly Psyllid Control

The new growth on some Lilly Pilly (*Syzygium*) varieties can develop distinct bubbles or lumps on the surface. If you turn over the leaf and look closely, you will see that the lumps are actually home to a tiny sap sucking insect. Called a psyllid, it is a relative of the aphid and scale. You can decide to just live with the lumpy leaves or you can try to control the outbreak.

There are a few steps involved in taking control of psyllids and it is not necessarily a quick fix. However, it is worth the effort, especially if time and money have been invested in establishing a Lilly Pilly hedge.

- Inspect the plant regularly to find evidence of psyllids before the outbreak gets out of control. There may be eggs under the leaves, adult insects moving around, or the larvae stage feeding on the leaves.
- Look for ants crawling on the plant. Psyllids secrete honeydew which attracts the ants, so they can be a sign that the psyllids are living in the Lilly pilly.
- Make sure that the plant is well watered regularly and use a quality slow-release fertiliser that feeds the soil and the plant. Healthy plants can withstand insect attack and are resistant to damage.
- Prune off affected foliage and dispose of it in the general waste, not in the compost or the green waste.
- If pruning will leave unsightly gaps in the plant, you will need a systemic treatment to control the insect. These insecticides, such as Congard, are absorbed into the foliage and kill the insect when it eats the plant. Spray the plant thoroughly, including the underside of the leaf.
- Do repeat applications of the insecticide to break the breeding cycle of the insect.

The other option is to replace badly affected Lilly Pillies (*Syzygium*) with varieties that are resistant to psyllids. “Resilience” is a form of *Syzygium* known for its brilliant red new growth. During summer it has fluffy white flowers, followed by small edible berries. It is highly resistant to many pests, including psyllids. It is ideal for hedging, screening and topiary.

Remember to be vigilant in monitoring your Lilly Pillies. The psyllids will travel so an outbreak in a neighbouring garden could result in an attack on your plants.

This is intended as general information only. Please ask one of our horticulturists for specific advice for your situation.