

**Whiteflies in Palm Beach County ~
Reducing Stress on Plants**
University of Florida / IFAS
Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension Service



Fact Sheet #5 in a series brought to you through the efforts of the Palm Beach County Whitefly Task Force

Task Force Website: <http://www.pbcgov.com/coextension/horticulture/whitefly/>
Whitefly Blog Archives: <http://palmbeachcountyextension.wordpress.com/category/whitefly/>

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REDUCING STRESS ON PLANTS

When people are tired and run down they are more likely to become sick because natural defenses are weakened. This may also be true with plants. Common stressors to our ficus hedges and trees include freezing temperatures, quick changes in temperature, poor fertilization practices, over-pruning or shearing, and over- or under-watering. If shearing can be delayed or reduced, more leaves are left on the plants for longer periods of time. This means more carbohydrates produced, and therefore more energy will be available for the plants to combat the multiple stressors, including whiteflies, that are affecting them. Alone, the ficus whitefly will not typically kill hedges; the cumulative effect with other stress factors may cause severe dieback or potential plant death.

Our sandy, low-fertility soils require regular, adequate fertilization from sources that are most available for plant use. Good fertilization helps ensure plants have what they need for health. Drought and inadequate watering, or conversely, overwatering or repeated heavy rains also stress your plants. Be sure to water no more than approximately 1 inch per week, the optimum amount for healthy plants. Windburn is an additional stress factor that causes burned and dropping leaves and can easily be confused with whitefly damage.

Remember, the label is the law; be sure to use products only in a manner consistent with the manufacturer directions on the labels.

Please use pesticides safely.

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