

## Program Naturally Combats Aphids on Oak Trees

The City recently launched a new program to naturally combat the aphid population on City oak trees. Along with being very harmful to trees and plants, sap-sucking aphids also excrete a sticky substance called honeydew. Over the past few weeks this substance has become a problem as it sticks to car windshields, making the vehicle almost impossible to drive due to the lack of visibility.

The City has developed a natural solution to counteract this issue by introducing the *aphidoletes aphidimyza*, a tiny fly like midge that hunts and ultimately kills aphid colonies. These midges are locally sourced and provide a natural way to eliminate the aphids while maintaining the natural ecosystem. Midges lay their eggs alongside an aphid colony and in two or three days will hatch and feed on the aphids. They live for about ten days; hiding beneath the leaves during the day and feeding on aphids at night.

City crews have used a high pressure stream of water to knock the aphids off the trees and then released the aphidoletes to take care of the remaining aphids.

Control of aphids is not easy and insecticides should be the last option as they can kill the beneficial insects as well as the harmful ones. We encourage residents to use a similar approach to eliminate aphids in an effort to minimize the use of harmful insecticides in the community.

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