

SOOTY MOULD

A very easy problem to recognise. The upper surfaces of the leaves are covered literally in a black sooty residue. The sootiness is a secondary problem, if you look closely on the underside of the leaves you will often see Scale insects. Scale look like tiny limpets suctioned to the rib on the back of the leaf. As they feed on the sap of your plant they produce a by-product which drops onto the upper surface of leaves below known as Honey Dew. The honey dew is sticky and clear, but forms a great base for the sooty mould to grow on. The mould is a separate fungus that grows on the honey dew and does no real harm to the plant. In the long term it slowly cuts out light getting to the leaves and will cause problems later.

To treat sooty mould the best method is a long process of wiping each leaf clean. Then this needs to be followed up with an insecticide to remove the primary pest, the scale insect. Bio Organic Pest Control and 2-in-1 very good but you must spray under each leaf to ensure good contact. Provado is systemic and very effective.