Sooty Mold

Today on Gardening in a Minute: sooty mold.

Plants can be bothered by a number of pests and diseases, including a fungal disease called sooty mold.

Sooty mold appears as a black, velvety coating on the leaves of certain plants like camellias, hollies, and citrus. Although it’s unattractive, sooty mold usually doesn’t damage plants.

The “mold” actually grows on the honeydew excreted by sucking insects like scale and aphids. When this sticky liquid falls on the leaves below, it creates an ideal growth medium for sooty mold.

The best way to prevent sooty mold is to manage the insects. To tackle the insects, try blasting the plant with the hose or using insecticidal soap, since these options are effective but nontoxic to kids, pets, and other animals.

For more information about sooty mold, contact your county Extension office or visit Gardening in a Minute dot com.

Gardening in a Minute is a production of the University of Florida’s Center for Landscape Conservation and Ecology, IFAS Extension, and WUFT-FM.