

# Hard scale – What is it and how to control it.

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**What is it?** Hard scale is a scale that forms a brown conical structure that protects the scale underneath it, while it breeds and sucks the living goodness out of your favourite orchid.



Figure 1 Hard scale on a Laeliinae orchid leaf.

## **How to control it.**

### **Stage 1: Making the stock solution.**

Step 1: Collect your materials.

Vegetable oil from the pantry, dishwashing liquid from under the kitchen sink, bottle with a sealing lid, measuring instruments.

Step 2: Measure out the oil (4 parts) and the dishwashing liquid (1 part) and pour into the bottle. In this case I have used ½ cup of oil and 1/8 cup of dishwashing liquid.

Step 3: Shake the living daylights out of the bottle – remembering to screw on the lid first.



Figure 3: Your materials



Figure 2: Four parts oil to one part dishwashing liquid



Figure 5: Mix together



Figure 4: Shaken - not stirred

### **Stage 2: Making the spraying solution.**

Step 4: Measure your freshly shaken stock solution and pour into your sprayer. In the photos I have used 20mL of stock solution and 1L of water in the sprayer.

Step 5: Shake the heebie-jeebies out of the sprayer. Need I mention that you should only do this after screwing on the lid.



Figure 6: 20mL stock solution and 1L water



Figure 7: Mix and shake

### Stage 3: Spraying the orchid.

Step 6: Hold your orchid in one hand, and your pumped-up sprayer in the other, and thoroughly spray every surface of your orchid. (Don't worry if you get some of this "magic" solution on your hands, as it is only cooking oil and dishwashing liquid.) Although if you are allergic to doing the washing-up, you might have to con someone else into doing this for you 😊



Figure 8: Thoroughly spray your orchid

### Stage 4: What now?

Step 7: Place the orchid in a non-sunny spot and ignore it. The hard scale will all be smothered (killed) shortly - although they will not disappear. You can wipe the now-dead scale off the next time you repot.

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