

P.S. From Rays computer list, the total number of bird species counted on the trip was 90, and 170 recorded sightings.

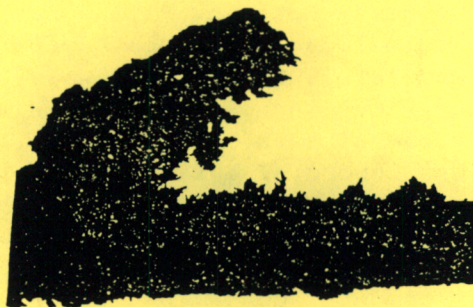
Author's Note: I think people should know that we were seven people who didn't know each other very well and that was part of the fun. It's not as if we were all pals who got together to do something for the weekend. I wouldn't like to think "I don't know anyone" is a reason for not participating in such an adventure.

SOOTY MOLDS IN CHARLOTTETOWN

by Dan McAskill

During the past 14 years in which I have been involved in forestry, there have been frequent reports on problems arising from heavy infestations of aphids or plant lice. Many of these calls resulted from the finding of a sticky substance on cars left under street or lawn trees but, sometimes, they were the result of individuals finding what looks like soot on cars, steps, leaves, and other items around trees. Upon investigation, the cause of these problems was the secretions of aphids feeding on adjacent trees, particularly lindens.

The problem becomes evident when significant numbers of aphids are feeding. The aphids suck such large amounts of sap from the leaves that much of it passes through the insect and is excreted with little or no change. As this sap contains sugars, amino acids, proteins, other organic substances, and minerals, ants often climb the trees to collect the excreted "honeydew". One of the distinguishing characteristics of the deposition of these sugars on the leaves, cars, or other objects is a sheen or glossy covering on the objects.



As with most surpluses of a ready source of food energy, various organisms have adapted to take advantage of it. Ants have already been mentioned but bees and wasps may also be attracted to it. The sugary surface solution also promotes the growth of several molds (fungi) of the family Capnodiaceae as well as other pigmented members of the Ascomycetes (sac fungi) and Deuteromycetes (asexual fungi). These molds grow on the surface of the leaf or other object covered with honeydew by utilizing it as food. The abundance of food allows them to produce large amounts of dark brown spores which blacken the leaves, furniture, car or other object giving the appearance of a soot-like deposit, hence the name, sooty molds. The presence of the microscopic dark thread-like mycelial network which forms much of the fungi can sometimes be detected when the leaves are looked at in side light. These structures are readily recognized under a microscope. When growth conditions are right for the sooty molds, the resultant growth can be so heavy that it reduces the light transmitted to the leaves thus impairing the host plant's photosynthesis. It must be remembered however, that these molds are not actually infecting the plant, they are essentially sitting on top of it utilizing the honeydew deposits.

Complaints from the Brighton Road area in Charlottetown were particularly heavy this fall. Some of the lower leaves had such a heavy growth of mold that they appeared to be covered with a very diffuse black tissue paper. These growths are washed off the trees or blown many tree