

Lebeck Mealybug, *Nipaecoccus viridis* (Newstead): An Emerging Pest in Florida Citrus

Where did it originate and where is it now?

Nipaecoccus viridis (Newstead) is native to the Middle East, Mediterranean, and Southern African regions. In November 2009, the insect was found on dodder in Palm Beach County. In June 2019, it was documented feeding on citrus in Highlands County.

The species has a wide range of hosts in Florida including: citrus, mango, pomegranate, grapevine, and several ornamental plants like hibiscus and mulberry.

What does it look like?

N. viridis adult females are small (<4 mm) and oval with spiky wax coverings. When they begin laying eggs, the females develop an extensive, white waxy ovisac (protective egg sack) which contains hundreds of tiny, red eggs smaller than a grain of ground pepper.

The adult males are 1.3-2.5 mm long and are brownish-purple with well developed wings.

Eggs develop into crawlers, which are mobile nymphs (offspring). These nymphs are very small (< 1 mm), reddish-purple. With magnification, the legs and antennae are easily seen.

What type of damage does it cause?

N. viridis prefers to feed and reproduce on fast growing plant parts like new flush, branches, and fruit. The fruit damage is distinct and makes the fruit unsightly and unmarketable. Fruit feeding causes hardened lumps and/or discoloration. Leaves also become twisted/distorted from feeding. In other regions, fruit drop causes 50% or more crop loss.

**If you think you may have the Lebeck Mealybug, please
contact the Florida Division of Plant Industry.
1-800-282-5153**

For more information, please contact Dr. Lauren Diepenbrock,
UF/IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center, Lake Alfred
ldiepenbrock@ufl.edu



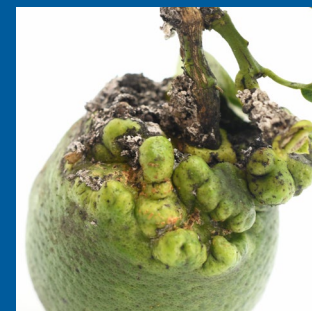
Individual adult female



Female life stages



Leaf damage due to
insect feeding



Fruit damage due to
insect feeding