

CITRUS PEST SPOTLIGHT

Green scale



Fig. 1. Green scale adults and crawlers



Fig. 2. Green scale infestation on young tree stem



Fig. 3. Sooty mold on leaves and fruit resulting from honeydew produced by green scales feeding on the branches above

By Michael E. Rogers

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Coccus viridis (Green) (Homoptera: Coccidae)

IDENTIFICATION

Adults and immature crawler stages (Fig. 1) are oval-shaped, flattened in appearance and, as the name suggests, light green in color. A distinctive feature of adults is the prominence of the digestive tract which appears as a curvy black line, often U-shaped, visible through the transparent body of the scale. Green scale is typically found feeding on new leaf flushes on the outer canopy of trees. Consequently, it is most often found on young trees (less than 5 years of age) that flush more often. When populations of green scale reach high levels, scales can be observed lined up along green stems and the midrib of young leaves (Fig. 2).

DAMAGE

Significant damage to tree health or fruit is unlikely to occur as a result of direct feeding damage by this pest. However, large amounts of sooty mold may occur on the leaves and fruit directly below infested parts of a tree (Fig. 3).

MANAGEMENT

In the past, green scale has not been observed that often because natural enemies have maintained this pest at low levels. Recently, this scale has become easier to find, most likely as a result of increased use of insecticides for psyllid control that disrupt biological control of this pest. When outbreaks of green scale occur, they are localized within a grove, affecting only a few branches on a small number of trees. Populations of green scale that begin increasing in the spring will decline to low levels by the late summer or early fall as a result of fungal pathogens or other natural enemies. Thus, insecticide applications specifically for control of green scale should not be needed.

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