

# CITRUS PEST SPOTLIGHT



**Fig. 1 (top left).** High populations of citrus snow scale covering the trunk of a citrus tree. The arrow shows an area of the trunk where a brush has been used to remove scales for monitoring of crawler activity.



**Fig. 2.** Citrus branch with snow scale crawlers (orange to dark red in appearance) present

## Citrus snow scale

By Michael Rogers

**Scientific name:**  
*Unaspis citri* (Comstock)  
(Homoptera: Diaspididae)

**Identification:** Citrus snow scale is found primarily on the trunk and branches of citrus

trees. When populations are high, these scale insects can completely cover the bark of the tree, giving it a white or “snowy” appearance (Fig. 1). The white scales, which are easily seen with the naked eye, are the males. The females are dark brown or purple in color, and similar in appearance to purple scale. Adult scales do not move. Dispersal of scales occurs during the crawler stage. Snow scale crawlers are orange to dark red in color (Fig. 2) and best observed using a hand lens.

**Damage:** High populations of snow scale can cause bark splitting (Fig. 3) on both the trunk and branches of trees. While snow scale does not typically affect fruit directly, severe infestations of snow scale can affect overall tree health.

**Management:** Historically, snow scale has been considered a sporadic pest occasionally requiring control. Parasitoids are believed to provide little control of snow scale. As a result, the ladybeetle *Chilocorus circumdatus* (Fig. 4) was successfully introduced into Florida in 1996 to help keep snow scale populations under control. However, the recent increase in pesticide use for psyllid control may have negative effects on this introduced ladybeetle. If snow scale populations reach damaging levels, pesticide applications should be timed to coincide with the presence of crawlers (the immature stage). Crawler activity can be monitored by using a brush to remove the scales from a portion of the tree trunk (Fig. 1) and observed weekly for movement of crawlers back into the cleaned area.

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**Fig. 3 (above).** Bark splitting caused by severe infestation of citrus snow scale



**Fig. 4 (right).** The introduced ladybeetle *Chilocorus circumdatus* feeding on citrus snow scale

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