



MEALEY BUG

Scientific name: Order Homoptera, family *Pseudococcidae*, several species

Size: Adult--1/10"

Identification: Female adults have soft, oval, segmented pink bodies covered by white waxy material. The rarely seen males have two wings and look like tiny flies.

Biology and life cycle: Female adults lay eggs in a cottony white mass that hatches in ten days. Active yellow nymphs called crawlers feed for one or two months or more. Several generations a year. Some mealybugs bear live young. Females molt twice; males form a thin cocoon before becoming adults. Winter is passed in all stages.

Habitat: Most fruit trees, grape, potatoes, and many ornamental and indoor foliage plants. They especially like citrus, grapes, and tropical plants. Common pest on interior plants and outdoor landscaping plants that are in stress.

Feeding habits: Female adults and nymphs suck juice from primarily the new growth of plants. Leaves turn yellow, and fruit drops prematurely. Honeydew from these insects supports growth of sooty mold and other diseases. Males don't have mouth parts (all they do is mate).

Economic importance: Can damage plant foliage and reduce fruit production.

Natural control: Birds and lizards. Healthy, stress-free plants are immune to this pest.

Organic control: Attract and release parasitic wasps. Release mealybug destroyer *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri* (indoors only), lady beetles, lacewings. Strong water spray, seaweed, and garlic tea or garlic/pepper tea, Cedar Gard, Spinosad Spray or Neem Oil Spray.

Insight: This is one of the most common insect pests on indoor plants, but it will attack landscape and garden plants as well. It is quick to show up on stressed plants.