



Woolly Whitefly nymphs. Darls spots are other scale species

Common Name:

Woolly Whitefly

Scientific Name:*Aleurothrixus floccosus*

Maskell (Homoptera: Aleyrodidae)

The eggs are laid on young leaves, and hatch in about a week. There are four nymphal stages lasting a total of 15 days or more depending on the weather. The immatures produce large quantities of wax which give the whitefly populations an appearance similar to fluffy wool. They pierce the undersides of leaves with their mouthparts and suck on the juices. They excrete large quantities of honeydew.

The honeydew provides a media for the growth of sooty mold organisms. The sooty mold can build up to a heavy crust, which can interfere with pruning and harvesting operations. Heavy infestation of whiteflies can cause premature leaf drop and defoliation in citrus.

The crops affected are citrus, guava and surinam cherry. This insect is native to tropical and subtropical America. It was accidentally introduced to North Africa and southern Europe in the 1970s. It spread to California in the mid-Sixties, then to Hawai'i and Guam in the early Eighties.

Control: Several effective parasites are known. One was apparently introduced to Guam with the whitefly. It seems to have the ability to clear up infestations, though not rapidly. Trees can be treated with white mineral oil. Good penetration of the crown and good coverage of lower sides of leaves are essential to provide control of the whitefly. Most insecticides are very toxic to the parasites and should be avoided unless severe damage is occurring.

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