



Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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Varroa (jacobsoni) mite (326)



Photo 1. Underside of adult varroa mite, *Varroa jacobsoni*.



Photo 2. *Varroa jacobsoni* on Asian bees, *Apis cerana*.



Photo 3. *Varroa jacobsoni* on an Asian bee, *Apis cerana*.



Photo 4. *Varroa jacobsoni* on larva of the Asian bee, *Apis cerana*.

Summary

- Widespread distribution. Normally, only on Asian honeybees where it is not a serious pest. Recently, found on European bees (Papua New Guinea).
- Adult female reddish-brown to dark brown, flattened, oval (crab-like), up to 1.8 mm long, 2 mm wide, on the thorax or in abdominal folds; males yellowish, with lightly tanned legs and spherical bodies, about 1 mm diameter.
- Mites enter brood cells, lay eggs, nymphs feed on bee larvae and pupae, mate, males die, and females attach and feed on bees. Note, only reproduce on male bee larvae as bees remove them from worker bee larvae and brood cells.
- Spread: i) within hive - they are mobile; ii) infested bees enter nearby hives to rob nectar, or by mistake; iii) swarming; iv) infested combs put in healthy hives.
- Cultural control: use open-screen floor hives; avoid using combs from brood area in honey area; hygiene: i) queen bees and equipment from trusted sources; ii) clean and sterilise borrowed, second-hand equipment, tools, gloves, pallets, boxes; iii) inspect brood combs regularly; iv) replace brood combs every 3 years.
- Chemical control: see full fact sheet for details of treating hives, equipment, and mite infestations on bees.

Common Name

Varroa mite, bee mite

Scientific Name

Varroa jacobsoni. Note, in 2000, research found that the population of *Varroa jacobsoni* was made up of two species, *Varroa*

jacobsoni and *Varroa destructor*. The latter is the damaging species of European honeybees (see **Fact Sheet no. 327**).

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Information from *BeeAware*, Plant Health Australia. (<http://beeaware.org.au/archive-pest/varroa-mites/#ad-image-0>); from *Biosecurity manual for beekeepers*. (<http://www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Biosecurity-Manual-for-Beekeepers.pdf>); Varroa mite detection in Townsville. Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Queensland Government. (<https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/animal-industries/bees/diseases-and-pest/asian-honey-bees/general-information-on-varroa-mites>). Photo 1 Lilia De Guzman, Bugwood.org. Photos 2-4 Walker K (2005) Varroa Mite (*Varroa jacobsoni*). PaDIL - (<http://www.padil.gov.au>).

Produced with support from the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research under project PC/2010/090: *Strengthening integrated crop management research in the Pacific Islands in support of sustainable intensification of high-value crop production*, implemented by the University of Queensland and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

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