

## Papaya mealybug (328)

### Summary

- Worldwide distribution. On fruit trees, vegetables, root crops, ornamentals, weeds. An important papaya mealybug.
- Damage: (i) thick layers of mealybugs and white wax on fruit and leaves causing yellowing, stunting, fruit drop; (ii) sooty moulds grow on honeydew, covering leaves, and staining fruit.
- Eggs laid into egg sac underneath female; produce 'crawlers' (nymphs); these moult developing into females, up to 2.2 mm long, with yellow bodies, covered in white wax, fringed with waxy threads. Males, short-lived, fly-like insects with wings.
- Spread by crawlers walking, or carried by wind, vehicles, animals, birds, on clothes, and the trade in plants.
- Natural enemies: ladybird beetles, wasp parasitoids (e.g., *Acerophagus papayae*).
- Cultural control: for ants: boiling water; prune low branches and remove weeds (to stop ants).
- Chemical control: use soap, horticultural or white oils (**see Fact Sheet no. 56**); avoid malathion and synthetic pyrethroids - they will kill natural enemies. Only use pyrethroids to kill ants.

### Common Name

Papaya mealybug

### Scientific Name

*Paracoccus marginatus*



Photo 1. Colonies of papaya mealybug, *Paracoccus marginatus*, along veins of papaya leaf.



Photo 2. Crust of mealybugs and wax, papaya mealybug, *Paracoccus marginatus*, on papaya fruit.



Photo 3. Masses of cotton wool-like wax over colony of papaya mealybug, *Paracoccus marginatus*.



Photo 4. Adults and crawlers, papaya mealybug, *Paracoccus marginatus*.



Photo 5. Slide-mounted adult female, papaya mealybug, *Paracoccus marginatus*.

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Information from Walker A *et al.* (2018) *Papaya mealybug, Paracoccus marginatus* Williams and Granara de Willink (Insecta: Hemiptera: Pseudococcidae). EDIS, University of Florida IFAS Extension. (<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in579>); and CABI (2017) *Paracoccus marginatus* (papaya mealybug) Crop Protection Compendium. (<https://www.cabi.org/cpc/datasheet/39201>); and from *Paracoccus marginatus*. Wikipedia. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paracoccus\\_marginatus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paracoccus_marginatus)). Photo 1 Peggy Greb, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Bugwood.org. Photo 2 Jeffrey W. Lotz, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Bugwood.org. Photos 3&4 Dale E. Meyerdirk, USDA APHIS PPO, Bugwood.org. Photo 5 Alessandra Rung, California Department of Food & Agriculture, Bugwood.org.

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