

Pineapple mealybug (282)

Summary

- Worldwide distribution. In tropics and sub-tropics. On crops and weeds in more than 50 families. An important pest.
- The mealybug gives birth to nymphs ("crawlers"), that moult to 2.5 mm adults covered in thick white wax, orange beneath.
- Spread is in fruit trade and that for planting material.
- Spreads *Pineapple mealybug wilt-associated virus*.
- Natural enemies; parasitoids and predators. Biocontrol successful when ants are controlled.
- Cultural control: treat crowns/slips in hot water (50°C for 30 mins.); cultivate to kill ants; avoid overlapping crops; remove diseased plants; weed.
- Chemical control: dip planting material in diazinon and white oil; ants – baits and synthetic pyrethroids

Common Name

Pineapple mealybug

Scientific Name

Dysmicoccus brevipes. A closely related species, the grey pineapple mealybug, *Dysmicoccus neobrevipes* also occurs. Several viruses in the ampelovirus group are associated with pineapple mealybug wilt disease (see **Fact Sheet no. 380**), and are spread by these *Dysmicoccus* species.



Photo 1. Pink, inwardly curling leaves of pineapple with pineapple mealybug wilt disease.



Photo 2. Plants showing pink, rolled, leaves typical of pineapple mealybug wilt disease. The 'wilt' symptoms are due to root decay, caused by virus infection.



Photo 4. Many plants with severe symptoms of pineapple mealybug wilt disease.



Photo 3. The two stunted plants in the foreground are showing symptoms of pineapple mealybug wilt disease.



Photo 5. Adult pineapple mealybug, *Dysmicoccus brevipes*. Note the fringe of waxy filaments around the body.



Photo 6. Colony of adults and nymphs of
the pineapple mealybug, *Dysmicoccus*
brevipes.

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Information from Waterhouse DF (1998) *Dysmicoccus brevipes*. Biological control of insect pests: Southeast Asian prospects. ACIAR Monograph no. 51, 548 pp. Canberra; and CABI (2015) *Dysmicoccus brevipes* (pineapple mealybug). Crop Protection Compendium. (<https://www.cabi.org/cpc/datasheet/20248>); and from Subere CVQ *et al.* (2011) Transmission characteristics of pineapple mealybug wilt associated virus-2 by the grey pineapple mealybugs *Dysmicoccus neobrevipes* in Hawaii. Proceedings 7th International Pineapple Symposium. Eds.: Abdullah H *et al.* Acta Hort. 902. ISHS. (https://www.ishs.org/ishs-article/902_47). Photos 1&2 United States National Collection of Scale Insects Photographs, USDA Agriculture Research Service, Bugwood.org. Photos 3&4 United States National Collection of Scale Insects Photographs, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Bugwood.org. Photos 5&6 John Thomas, Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Queensland Government.

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