

THE BERMUDA GRASS STUNT MITE¹
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INTRODUCTION: THE BERMUDA GRASS STUNT MITE, *ACERIA NEOCYNODONIS* KEIFER, WHICH BELONGS TO THE FAMILY ERIOPHYIDAE, WAS FIRST REPORTED FROM ARIZONA IN 1959, FROM CALIFORNIA IN 1960, AND FROM FLORIDA IN 1962 AT THE PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, COCOA. IT WAS ALSO REPORTED FROM OPA LOCKA IN 1962 AND FROM JACKSONVILLE IN 1964. SURVEYS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR THIS MITE IN OTHER PARTS OF FLORIDA, BUT TO DATE IT HAS BEEN FOUND ONLY ON THE EAST COAST.

HOST: THE BERMUDA GRASS STUNT MITE HAS BEEN FOUND ONLY ON BERMUDA GRASS, *CYNODON DACTYLON* (L.).

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE: THIS MITE LIVES IN THE TERMINAL SHEATHS WHERE IT CAUSES STUNTING, A WITCHES-BROOM EFFECT, AND GENERAL DECLINE OF THE GRASS (FIG. 1). WELL KEPT LAWNS AND GOLF COURSES PLANTED TO BERMUDA GRASS CAN PROBABLY SUPPORT A LIGHT INFESTATION OF MITES WITHOUT CAUSING IT TOO MUCH DAMAGE. POORLY KEPT GRASS (LACK OF PROPER FERTILIZATION AND WATER) WILL PROBABLY SUFFER WITH ANY DEGREE OF INFESTATION. SOME ERIOPHYIDS ARE KNOWN TO CAUSE MALFORMATION IN THEIR RESPECTIVE HOST PLANTS WHILE OTHER SPECIES DO NOT CAUSE VISIBLE SYMPTOMS TO THEIR HOSTS. SOME OF THE DEFORMATIONS OR INJURIES CAUSED BY SOME SPECIES OF MITES ARE: LEAF DISCOLORATION, VARIOUS LEAF GALLS, LEAF POCKETING, LEAF ERINEUM (DEVELOPMENT OF HAIRY PATCHES), DRYING OF BULBS, LEAF BLISTERS, AND THE STUNTING OF SHOOTS SUCH AS WITCHES-BROOM EFFECT IN BERMUDA GRASS.

DESCRIPTION: *A. NEOCYNODONIS* (FIG. 2) IS WHITISH CREAM COLOR AND WORMLIKE IN SHAPE. THE CLEAR LINES AND ROUNDED MICROTUBERCLES SET AHEAD OF THE REAR RING MARGINS ON THE DORSAL SHIELD (FIG. 3) DISTINGUISH THIS MITE FROM OTHER KNOWN GRASS FEEDERS (KEIFER, 1960). THE FEATHER CLAW (FIG. 4) HAS SIX RAYS.

REFERENCE: KEIFER, H. H. 1960. ERIOPHYID STUDIES B-1, BUREAU OF ENTOMOLOGY, CALIF. DEPT. AGR., 20 P.

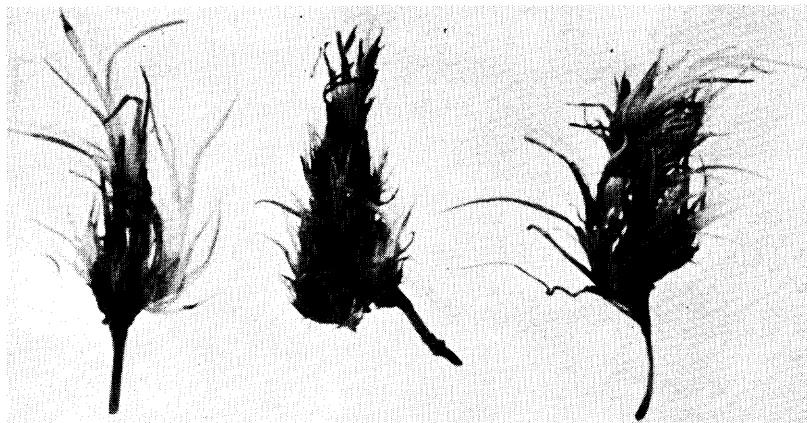


FIG. 1

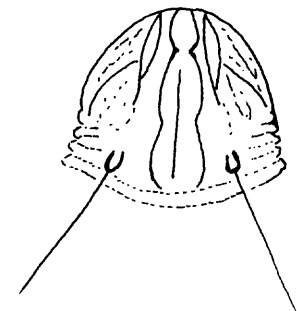


FIG. 3

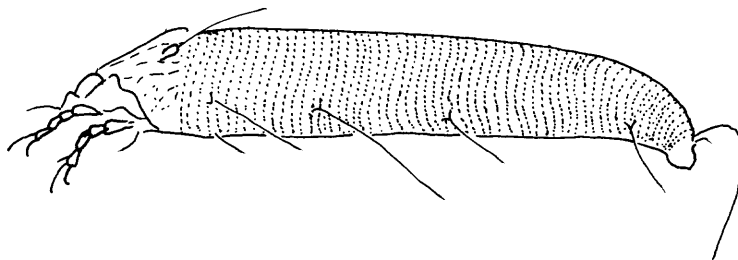


FIG. 2



FIG. 4

¹CONTRIBUTION NO. 46, ENTOMOLOGY SECTION, DIVISION OF PLANT IND., FLA. DEPT. AGR.