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# THE SOUTHERN RED MITE, OLIGONYCHUS ILICIS (McGREGOR)

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**INTRODUCTION:** THE SOUTHERN RED MITE (THE ACCEPTED COMMON NAME) WAS DESCRIBED BY McGREGOR IN 1916 AS TETRANYCHUS ILICIS, TAKEN ON AMERICAN HOLLY AT BATESBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA. THE HOLOTYPE IS IN THE U. S. NATIONAL MUSEUM. THIS MITE IS A COMMON PEST OF ORNAMENTALS IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES.

**DISTRIBUTION:** ALTHOUGH THE SOUTHERN RED MITE WAS DESCRIBED FROM SPECIMENS IN SOUTH CAROLINA, ITS NATIVE HOME IS PROBABLY THE FAR EAST ACCORDING TO PRITCHARD AND BAKER (1955). THEIR DISTRIBUTION RECORDS INCLUDE JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES. OUTSIDE OF THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES THIS MITE HAS BEEN REPORTED FROM CALIFORNIA, NEW YORK AND OHIO.

**HOSTS:** IN FLORIDA IT HAS BEEN REPORTED ON THE FOLLOWING HOSTS: CAMELLIA JAPONICA L., CLEYERA JAPONICA (L.) THUNB., ELAEAGNUS PUNGENS THUNB., EUCALYPTUS PULVERULENTA, EUGENIA JAMBOS ALSTON, GREVILLEA ROBUSTA CUNN., HIBISCUS SP., ILEX CORNUTA 'BURFORDII' DEF., ILEX CRENATA THUNB., ILEX OPACA AIT., ILEX ROTUNDIFOLIA HORT., ILEX VOMITORIA AIT., JUNIPERUS SP., OXALIS SP., PHOTINIA GLABRA, PHOTINIA SERRULATA LINDL., PYRACANTHA COCCINEA ROEM., RHODODENDRON INDICUM (L.) SWEET, AND VIBURNUM ODORATISSIMUM KER.

**ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE:** THIS MITE FEEDS PRIMARILY ON FOLIAGE OF WOODY ORNAMENTAL PLANTS. IT IS PARTICULARLY A PEST OF AZALEAS AND CAMELLIAS. IT USUALLY ATTACKS THE LOWER LEAF SURFACE AND AS THE POPULATION INCREASES IT WILL MOVE TO THE UPPER SURFACE OF THE LEAVES AND ON TO SMALL SUCCULENT STEMS. IT INJURES THE LEAVES CAUSING A GRAYING OR MESOPHYLL COLLAPSE, "FIRING," AND DEFOLIATION (FIG. 1).

**CONTROL:** THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IFAS, DEPARTMENT OF ENTOMOLOGY AND NEMATOLOGY, RECOMMENDS A MIXTURE OF ETHION AND OIL EMULSION AT THE RATE OF 2 TABLESPOONS PER GALLON OF WATER FOR CONTROL OF THIS PEST. CHLOROBENZILATE, KELTHANE AND TEDION USED AT THE RECOMMENDED DOSAGE WILL GIVE GOOD CONTROL. FOLLOW THE RECOMMENDATION AND OBSERVE ALL PRECAUTIONS ON THE LABEL.

**DESCRIPTION:** THE FEMALE (FIG. 2) IS APPROXIMATELY 385 μ IN LENGTH; BODY ROTUND-ELLIPTICAL. MALE IS APPROXIMATELY 300 μ IN LENGTH, MUCH LESS ROTUND, AND NARROWED POSTERIORLY. THE AEDEAGUS IS ILLUSTRATED IN FIG. 3. BOTH SEXES ARE FERRUGINOUS TO REDDISH BROWN, DARKER THAN MOST RED SPIDER MITES FOUND ON WOODY ORNAMENTALS.

FIG. 1. AZALEA LEAF ON RIGHT INFESTED WITH SOUTHERN RED MITE.

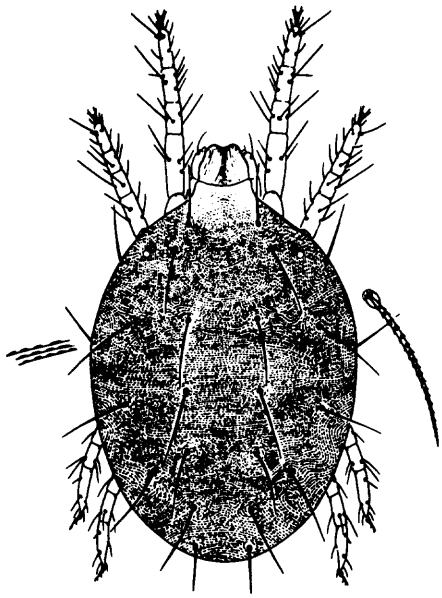

FIG. 2. FEMALE, DORSAL VIEW. (AFTER PRITCHARD AND BAKER)

FIG. 3. MALE AEDEAGUS

**LITERATURE CITED:**

McGREGOR, E. A. 1917. DESCRIPTIONS OF SEVEN NEW SPECIES OF RED SPIDERS. PROC. U. S. NATL. MUS., 51:581-590.

PRITCHARD, A. EARL AND E. W. BAKER. 1955. A REVISION OF THE SPIDER MITE FAMILY TETRANYCHIDAE. PACIFIC COAST ENTOMOL. SOC. MEMO., 2:472 P.

1
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