

Bamboo pit scale, Asterolecanium bambusae (Boisduval)

(HOMOPTERA: COCCOIDEA: ASTEROLECANIIDAE)¹

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INTRODUCTION: Asterolecanium bambusae was originally described as Chermes bambusae by Boisduval (1869:260) on Bambusa arundinacea (Retz.) Willd. and B. distorta Nees from Algeria. This pit scale insect is one of the most common insects on bamboo in Florida and occurs wherever bamboo is grown.

Description: At maturity the female is covered by a glassy wax cover (fig. 1 & 2). The cover or test is translucent, greenish, brownish, or pale yellow. It is usually distinctly longer than wide, somewhat ovoid, and is 1.5 - 3.5 mm long by 1.0 - 2.5 mm wide (Russell 1941:47). If specimens are undisturbed, the test has a marginal fringe of wax threads that are usually white but may be brown or pink (Ferris 1955:15). As the female lays eggs her body becomes smaller, and at the end of egg deposition, her body is a dark yellow or brown spot at the anterior end of the test (fig. 2). This species is parthenogenetic; so males do not occur.



Fig. 1. Bamboo pit scale, female
(65x) DPI #701403

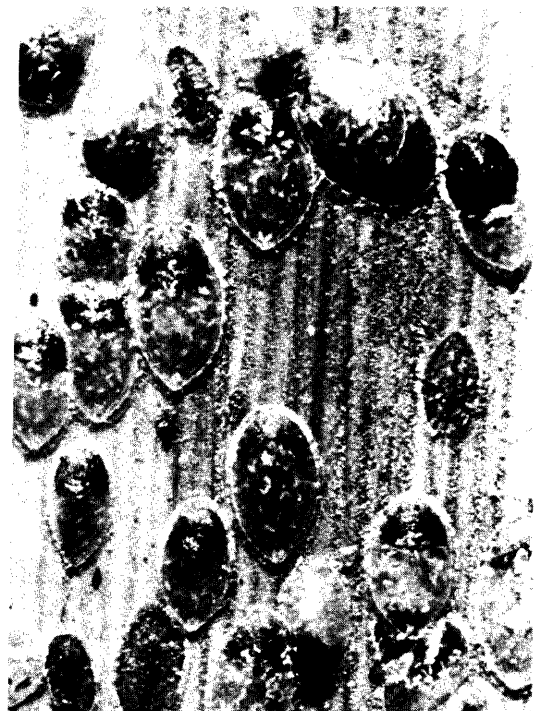


Fig. 2. Bamboo pit scale, dark
shriveled female under
wax test (22x) DPI #701403

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SURVEY AND DETECTION:

1. Scales may be found throughout the year.
2. Inspect both leaf surfaces, around nodes, and stems.
3. Submit adult female specimens, on the host, in a plastic bag or envelope.

DISTRIBUTION: Alabama, Algeria, Angola, Antigua, Argentina, Australia, Barbados, Bermuda, Brazil, California, Calal Zone, China, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Egypt, Florida, Georgia, Gold Coast, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guam, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Hawaii, Honduras, Illinois, India, Italy, Jamaica, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montserrat, New Caldeonia, New York, Pennsylvania, Philippine Islands, Puerto Rico, Reunion, St. John (Virgin Islands), Texas, Tobago, Venezuela, Washington DC.

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE: This scale insect is a serious pest when populations become very large. Bamboo appears to be somewhat tolerant if populations are small. As with all scale insects, large quantities of sap can be removed and thereby cause damage.

CONTROL: This scale insect is difficult to control with chemicals because of the wax test or cover; therefore, one of the systemic insecticides such as dimethoate is recommended. Consult your county agent or pest control operator for specific details of control.

LITERATURE CITED:

- Boisduval, J. B. A. 1869. Note sur deux especes de coccidae vivant sur les bambous cultives au Jardin du Hama. Insect Agr. 3:260-262.
- Ferris, G. F. 1955. Atlas of scale insects of North America 7:1-233, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, California.
- Russell, L. M. 1941. A classification of the scale insect genus Asterolecanium. U. S. Dept. Agr., Misc. Publ. 424;1-322, 84 fig.