

Rhizoecus arabicus Hambleton, a root mealybug in Florida

(HOMOPTERA: COCCOIDEA: PSEUDOCOCCIDAE)¹

Avas B. Hamon²

INTRODUCTION: A root mealybug, Rhizoecus arabicus Hambleton, was recently discovered (March 1982) in Florida for a new North American record. It was collected on the gesneriad Gasteranthus atratus (Hanst.) Wiehler by Mr. David Culbert, Agricultural Products Specialist, in Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota, Florida. The only published information about this root mealybug is the original description by Hambleton (1976).

DESCRIPTION: The adult female is slightly less than 2 mm long. Antennae are 6-segmented. Eyes moderately prominent, but only slightly pigmented. Cephalic plate present, but difficult to discern in most specimens. Legs are well developed; claw digitules very short and setose. The conical circulus is faveolate. Multilocular disc pores absent. Tritubular cerores small and projecting above derm.

In the field adult females are found in small patches of white wax on the outside of root balls (fig. 1). They appear much like other species of root mealybugs.

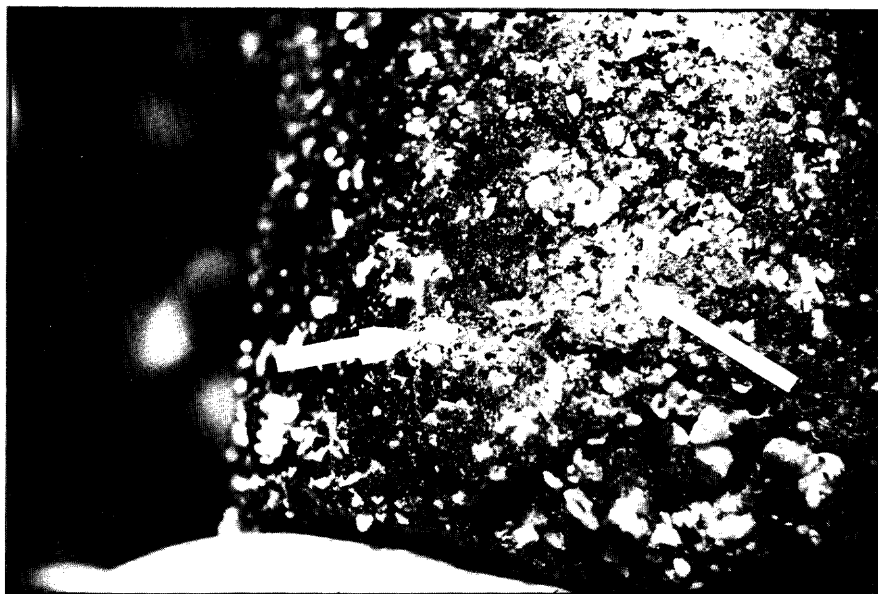


Fig. 1. Rhizoecus arabicus, white wax patches on root ball. DPI #702465-2.

¹/ Contribution No. 545, Bureau of Entomology.

²/ Taxonomic Entomologist, Div. Plant Ind., P. O. Box 1269, Gainesville, FL 32602

HOSTS: In the original description, the hosts were Coffea arabica L. and an undetermined member of the family, Gramineae (Hambleton 1976). New hosts reported in Florida are as follow: Alloplectus cucullatus Morton, Gasteranthus acropodus (Donn. Smith) Wiehler, G. atratus (Hanst.) Wiehler, G. corallinus (Fritsch) Wiehler, G. dressleri Wiehler, G. maculatus Wiehler, Monopyle grandiflora Wiehler, M. paniculata Benth., Nautilocalyx punctatus Wiehler.

DISTRIBUTION: Reported from Colombia and Costa Rica previous to the Florida location.

SURVEY AND DETECTION:

1. Remove plants from pots and visually inspect root ball for white mealy wax areas and small, white mealybugs.
2. Submit mealybugs and root material to the Division of Plant Industry in alcohol or send small amounts of roots and soil in double plastic bags.

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE: Most of the Rhizoecus species injurious to plants in the U. S. are of foreign origin. Therefore, it is imperative that this potential pest species be eliminated from Florida.

CONTROL: Controls recommended by the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences include Diazinon 4E (AG 500), Diazinon 50 WP, Vydate 2L, and Temik 10% G. LABEL DIRECTIONS SHOULD BE FOLLOWED IN ALL CASES.

LITERATURE CITED:

Hambleton, E. J. 1976. A revision of the new world mealybugs of the genus Rhizoecus. U. S. Dept. Agric. Tech. Bull. 1522. 88p. illus.