

Citrus Pest Quick Guide: Brown Soft Scale (*Coccus hesperidum* Linnaeus)

Life Cycle

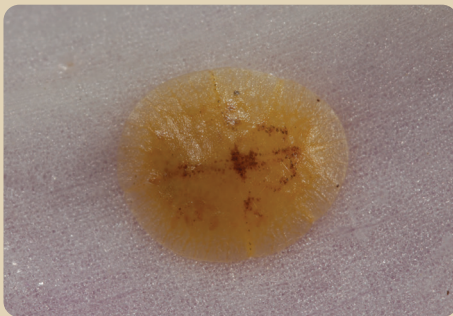
Immature brown soft scale hatch as crawlers, then settle to feed. Young soft scales can relocate when disturbed.

Brown soft scale is flat and oval during larval and adult stages with color ranging from yellowish to light brown. Color becomes darker as the scale ages, and its outer covering becomes tougher.

Populations of brown soft scale are generally found on leaves and twigs with occasional infestation on fruit. Brown soft scale populations tend to be clumped together due to their high reproductive capacity. Three to five overlapping generations have been recorded in citrus.

Damage

Brown soft scale excretes large quantities of honeydew (sugary solution) while feeding, which provides a substrate for sooty mold to develop. Sooty mold can cover leaves and fruit, reducing photosynthetic capabilities of trees. In older plantings, this feeding can result in reduced tree vigor, twig dieback, and reduced fruit quality and/or yield. In younger plantings and nursery stock, these scales and the resulting honeydew accumulation can sometimes cause tree death.



Brown soft scale.
Credit: L. Buss, UF/IFAS



Brown soft scale on citrus.
Credit: L. M. Diepenbrock, UF/IFAS



Darker scales are parasitized.
Credit: L. Buss, UF/IFAS



Parasitized brown soft scale. Holes indicate where a parasitoid has emerged.
Credit: L. Buss, UF/IFAS



Colony of brown soft scale with crawlers, adults, and parasitized adults present.
Credit: L. Buss, UF/IFAS



Sooty mold growing on honeydew excreted by scales.
Credit: M.E. Rogers, UF/IFAS

1. This document is ENY-2038, one of a series of the Entomology and Nematology Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date February 2020. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu> for the currently supported version of this publication.

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