

False-Mastic Psylla, *Ceropsylla sideroxyli* Riley (Insecta: Hemiptera: Psyllidae)¹

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Introduction

Leaves of the false-mastic tree (*Sideroxylon foetidissimum* Jacq.) commonly are attacked by a jumping plant louse, *Ceropsylla sideroxyli* Riley. Damage is often severe, but since the host itself is not highly commercialized, little attention has been given to control methods.



Figure 1. New adult false-mastic psylla, *Ceropsylla sideroxyli* Riley, emerging from a pupal case. Credits: Lyle J. Buss, University of Florida

Description

Psyllid nymphs are found on the underside of a leaf, embedded in small, scattered, cup-shaped excavations, which on the upper side of the leaf appear as rough, elevated pustules. A white waxlike (not flocculent) excretion covers the dorsal surface of the nymphs and makes them very conspicuous.



Figure 2. Nymphs of the false-mastic psylla, *Ceropsylla sideroxyli* Riley. Credits: Lyle J. Buss, University of Florida

Adult psyllids of this species are 4 mm long to tip of folded wings. Their general color is green to yellow. The front of head, between antennae,

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Figure 3. Nymph (left) and a pit (right), from which it was removed, of a false-mastic psylla, *Ceropsylla sideroxyli* Riley. Credits: Lyle J. Buss, University of Florida

including genal (=cheek) processes, the anterior 2/3 of prescutum and two broad stripes on scutum (=back), are dark brown. The antennae are dark apically. The wings are hyaline (glassy or transparent).



Figure 4. Adult false-mastic psylla, *Ceropsylla sideroxyli* Riley. Credits: Lyle J. Buss, University of Florida

Microscopic characters of the head and wings are used to separate this psyllid from other species. No other closely related species is known from Florida. In fact, Arnett (2000) lists this species as the only member of its genus America north of Mexico.

Hosts Plant

The host plant species, according to Little (1953), ranges from southern Florida, including the Florida Keys, north on the eastern coast to Cape Canaveral. It also is found in the West Indies (including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands), and a variety is found in Yucatan peninsula of Mexico and British Honduras. The USDA Plant database lists Florida as the only state which has this species (USDA 2006).



Figure 5. Infestation of the false-mastic psylla, *Ceropsylla sideroxyli* Riley. Credits: Lyle J. Buss, University of Florida

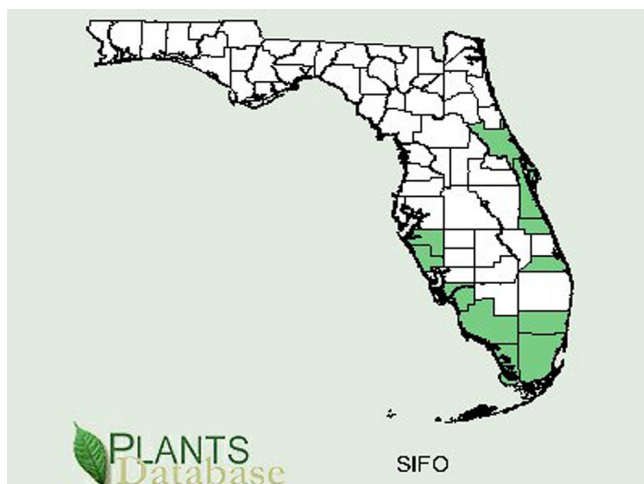


Figure 6. Range of *Sideroxylon foetidissimum* in Florida.

Little (1953) lists mastic and wild olive as other common names and gives *Sideroxylon mastichodendron* and *Mastichodendron foetidissimum* as synonyms. The specific epithet refers to the very ill-smelling, cheese-like odor of the numerous flowers.

This psyllid also attacks other *Sideroxylon* (Sapotaceae) species (Percy 2005).

Selected References

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