

RESEARCH LABORATORY TECHNICAL REPORT

Mealybugs on Taxus

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Taxus (yew) in nursery and landscape plantings is susceptible to infestation by two species of mealybugs: Taxus mealybug and grape mealybug. Plant injury from mealybugs occurs when immatures and adults insert their stylet into the cells of the twigs and remove the contents. Mealybugs generally infest twig crotches on interior portions of Taxus. Due to the very dense branching habit of the host, infestations often go unnoticed until the plant begins to decline. Severely infested plants exhibit sparse, chlorotic foliage, poor growth and twig and branch dieback. The foliage and twigs usually are covered with honeydew and sooty mold.

Taxus Mealybug

The Taxus mealybug (*Dysmicoccus wistariae*) occurs in most northeastern and central states. In addition to Taxus, this pest will feed on Rhododendron, maple, linden, dogwood and other many other woody plants.

Adult females are the most conspicuous stage of the pest (Figure 1). Females are oval, hemispherical and eight to ten mm long and five mm wide. The body is red in color and covered with white, waxy secretions. White, waxy filaments also extend from the edge of the body. Body segments are obvious beneath the waxy covering. Males are minute, white, two-winged

insects. Immatures (nymphs) closely resemble scale crawlers. They are very small in this stage with light yellow to brown smooth bodies.

Taxus mealybug overwinters on the bark as an immature. Feeding resumes in spring and by early summer they have become reproductive adults. In warm climates, 2-3 generations may be present. The immatures feed until the onset of winter, when it overwinters under bark scales or beneath the waxy covering of a dead female

Figure 1: Adult mealybug



Grape Mealybug

This mealybug (*Pseudococcus maritimus* Ehrhorn) occurs primarily in the central and western states. In addition to Taxus, the grape mealybug feeds on many other woody plants, particularly grape and other rosaceous plants. Herbaceous ornamental trees and shrubs may also be infested.

Adult females of the grape mealybug resemble the Taxus mealybug adult except they are somewhat smaller. Fully-grown females are approximately six mm long and three mm wide. Immatures and adult males of the grape mealybug also resemble those of the Taxus mealybug.

In early spring, immatures of the grape mealybug begin feeding and complete development by mid-June. Adults mate and the female deposits eggs in masses of white, waxy secretions. Eggs hatch by mid-July and the second-generation immatures begin feeding. This generation completes development in late summer or early fall, when adults mate and lay eggs. This species overwinters as an egg or as an immature if the eggs hatch during warm fall weather. Two generations occur each year.

Pest Management

Infestations of the Taxus and grape mealybugs can be maintained at low levels. Please contact your Bartlett Arborist Representative to learn about treatment options for these pests.



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