

Sunridge Nurseries *ensures* clean material.

The biology of the vine mealybug

The vine mealybug (*Planococcus ficus*), is a serious pest on grapevines. It has spread rapidly in California and has been found in most of its grape growing regions. Once established in a region, it is difficult to eradicate. The VMB can feed on roots, trunks, canes, leaves and fruit. It is more tenacious than other, more common mealybugs because it can have up to six generations per year and can overwinter under the bark and on the shallow roots just under the surface of the soil.

The VMB does damage to grapevines by exuding honeydew, which makes the leaves and fruit clusters sticky. Sooty mold grows on the honeydew which can make the fruit unmarketable.

The worst VMB infestations are found in the Coachella Valley and the Del Rey region in Fresno County.

How VMB is spread

VMB, like all species of mealybug, can be spread in several ways. The female is unable to fly, so it is moved by humans (hitchhiking on clothing, arms, hands, equipment and hand tools), by birds (hitchhiking on feet and feathers) and by movement of vine material.

Short-range spread of VMB is likely done by labor, equipment and bird movement from vine-to-vine and vineyard to vineyard. Long-range spread is possible with labor and equipment movement, as well as vine material movement.

Vine material movement is very extensive throughout all regions. Dormant cuttings are frequently moved from vineyard to vineyard and vineyard to nurseries. Dormant cuttings are regularly moved around the state from grower to grower and grower to budders without being monitored by agriculture commissioners, CDFA or any other entity. This makes movement of the vine mealybug very likely. Nurseries, on the other hand, are controlled and routinely inspected giving them a much greater ability to prevent spread.

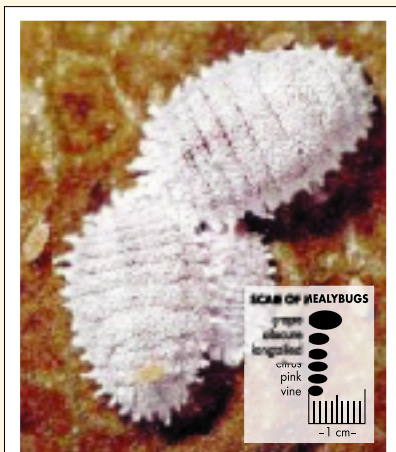
Sunridge Nurseries ensures Clean Material

Sunridge Nurseries has been treating all plant material with Admire (imidicloprid) since 1999. Green material is also treated with contact insecticides. We have been refusing all grapevine propagation plants and wood from infested areas for three years. All incoming wood is inspected and treated. Sunridge has been in compliance with all CDFA cleanliness requirements since the VMB was first sited in the San Joaquin Valley and we are routinely inspected by CDFA and our local agricultural commissioner's office.

Sunridge Nurseries has voluntarily taken the initiative to hot water dip all vines and cuttings. We do routine inspections of our mother blocks and are trapping/monitoring with VMB pheromone traps.



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The vine mealybug (*Planococcus ficus*) is more tenacious than other mealybugs because it can have up to six generations per year and can overwinter under bark and on roots.

How to effectively treat

Complete eradication of the Vine Mealybug is very difficult. The best chances for eradication are obtained through early detection. Scout blocks frequently (2-3 times per season) looking for honeydew, ants and black sooty mold. If found, quick action is the best way to prevent spread and gives the best chance for eradication. Any mealybugs found should be taken to your local farm advisor for positive identification.

At present, biological control has only been partially successful. The use of insecticides like Admire, Lorsban, Lannate and others will give the best results, but they may disrupt your IPM program. Regardless, it is best to react early, while the populations and distribution within your vineyards are on a small scale.

If you would like more information about the vine mealybug or what Sunridge is doing to curtail its spread, please call 661-363-8463 or visit these websites:

<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu>

<http://www.sunridgenurseries.com>





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