

Fact sheet:

White Peach Scale *Pseudaulacaspis pentagona*



White Peach Scale (WPS) is considered a serious threat to the New Zealand kiwifruit industry. This pest has caused significant impact to the kiwifruit industry in Latina, Italy with fruit losses of 10-20% being recorded in some years. New Zealand has a suitable climate for this pest and it could easily survive if it established here.

Identification

WPS look similar to other armoured scale insects found in New Zealand. The adult female scale is immobile on the host plant and covered with a protective shell. It is dull white to yellowish in colour and oval in shape with an overall length of 2.0-2.5mm.

Adult males emerge as tiny winged insects, begin building armour and develop a long white to yellowish coloured shell. After moulting three more times they are orange and live for approximately 24 hours.



Images above, from left: adult females and larvae; numerous larvae; heavy infestation on 'Hongyang' kiwifruit in China (photo Garry Hill, Plant and Food Research)

Signs and symptoms

WPS infects bark, fruit and leaves of plants. In severe cases it appears as white, cottony masses encrusting the bark of the tree. Scale insect feeding can result in early leaf and fruit drop. Trees which are heavily infested can become stunted and young plants can die very quickly after infestation.

Distribution and climate range

WPS originated in eastern Asia and has global distribution including presence in USA, Europe, Australia and the Pacific Islands.

It is widely adapted to a range of climatic regions and could easily establish in New Zealand's conditions if it were introduced to a host here.



Control

WPS is especially problematic when incursions occur in areas where natural predators are absent. Pheromone traps are widely used for detection in newly infested regions, especially in Europe. If an incursion does occur, agrichemical sprays such as those used against other armour scale insects can be used. Costs of control are significant for countries facing incursions.

What should you do if you think you have seen this pest?

Phone MPI on 0800 80 99 66 or KVH on 0800 665 825