

## Striped Mealybug (*Ferrisia virgata* [Cockerell])

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The adult female is covered with powdery white wax and has a pair of purplish dorsal stripes along the back. Long, glossy white wax threads extend from the body and there are two long wax tails. The combination of tails and stripes on the back serves to distinguish this insect from other species of mealybugs.

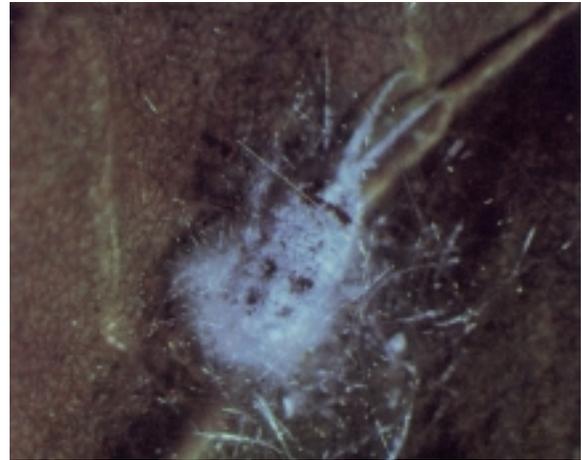
Eggs are laid alongside the adults and the young usually develop close by. Although these insects can walk, they do not generally move very far and large clusters of mealybugs may appear. The life cycle takes about 40 days. The mealybugs are often tended by ants, and the ants act to keep other insects, including mealybug parasites and ladybeetles, away from the mealybugs.

The mealybug attacks a wide variety of hosts including sweet potato, cassava, coffee, cacao, citrus, and guava. It is common on tomatoes and eggplants, particularly on water-stressed plants. It feeds on the leaves, shoots, fruits and will move onto the roots in dry weather. It can get under the calyx of fruits and cause scarring on the fruit. This can be a serious problem on eggplant. The insect occurs throughout most of the Pacific region.

### Control

Plants should be maintained in a healthy condition, avoiding water stress, and the plants should not be kept in the field long past their peak yielding period. On tree crops, parasites will usually control the infestation eventually, but on field crops insecticidal control may be necessary.

If chemical control is necessary, consult an Extension Agent at your local land grant institution. On



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Guam, you may also consult the Guam Fruit and Vegetable Pesticide Guide for current recommendations and permissible uses.

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