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New Pest In Community Environments – Ficus Whitefly

Ficus (Fig) Whitefly (*Singhiella simplex*) (Hemiptera: Aleyrodidae)

This exotic, invasive pest insect has recently been reported from the **Phoenix area in Arizona**, causing damage and defoliation in ficus trees. It first arrived in the U.S. in Florida in 2007. Ficus whiteflies are small, winged insects about $\frac{1}{8}$ th inch in length, related to aphids, scale insects and mealy bugs. Nymphs (young ones) are $\frac{1}{8}$ th to $\frac{1}{16}$ th inch in length, flat and oval in shape with red eyes, wingless, and resemble scale insects (Fig. 1). Both adults and nymphs are typically found on the undersides of leaves, but occasionally on the upper sides also. They feed by inserting their needle-like mouthparts into the undersides of leaves and suck out nutrients, resulting in wilting, yellowing, stunting leaf drop and sometimes death of the plant. They are only reported to attack *Ficus* spp. that are common and popular landscape plants in community environments. They are currently not known to infest other plants.



Fig 1. Ficus whitefly adult and mature nymph. Photo: H. Glenn, UF/IFAS

Excellent, science-based guidance on the effective management of this insect is available from University of FL Extension. (PDF available at the following link):
http://cizr.ucr.edu/pdf/ficus_whitefly_feb2010_fact_sheet.pdf.

Severe defoliation in ficus plants (Fig. 2) may prompt the use of chemical sprays. However, the decision to intervene with a pesticide should be carefully considered. In Florida, just one, very well timed soil application of a neonicotinoid insecticide like dinotefuran or imidacloprid provided year-long control of this pest. Mixtures with other insecticides and foliar sprays are generally not necessary and counterproductive because of their negative impacts on beneficial predators and parasites, and the possible development of resistance in the pest to insecticides.



Fig 2. Severely defoliated ficus plant (*Ficus benjamina*).
Photo: Kai Umeda, University of Arizona

The University of Arizona Cooperative Extension is working in partnership with

stakeholders and the industry to collect information about the ficus whitefly and to develop AZ-specific strategies to address the problem.

You can help in identifying the distribution of this new pest in AZ by participating in an anonymous "sightings" survey available online here: <http://goo.gl/forms/TZE12dDRm5>. Your information could help us understand the geographic and host range of this new whitefly and develop steps to prevent further damage.

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For more information on Ficus Whitefly, please view:
<http://cals.arizona.edu/apmc/ficuswhitefly.html>

New Publication Available

New publication: "[Handbook on Pests of Community Environments in the Desert Southwest United States](#)" by Nair S., D.H. Gouge, M. Rust, S. Li, U.K. Schuch, A.J. Fournier, D.M. Kopec, K. Umeda, P.B. Baker, L.M. Brown, N. Duggal. 2015.

This publication was developed through a grant from the Western Region IPM Center, and is available on the Arizona Pest Management Center website at <http://cals.arizona.edu/apmc/Handbook.html>.

It covers all major arthropod, vertebrate and weed pests encountered in community environments in the desert southwestern United States, and will serve as a handy reference guide to support community IPM efforts in this region. The book consolidates available information into a single, reader-friendly unit that can be easily accessed online, or printed as necessary. Management measures for individual organisms are not presented, but IPM steps to manage most of these organisms in a practical, safe and sustainable manner are listed, as well as sources that provide information on specific management measures for individual pests.



Bed Bug Battle – We Want to Hear From You

The University of Arizona and several partnering research institutions are working to battle the bed bug resurgence in the United States. Researchers want to determine the real impacts and social costs associated with bed bugs, the risks to individuals and society, as well as the significant causes of infestations.

Please help us in the project by completing an online bed bug survey. This survey asks brief questions on how bed bugs affect your life, how bed bugs cause people stress, and what people do when trying to get rid of them. This voluntary survey should take about ten minutes. The survey is available in English and Spanish. There is no compensation available for your participation. Your answers are anonymous and confidential while you contribute information that will help us battle the pesky parasites.

Who should take this survey? Everyone! We would like to hear from people who currently live with bed bugs, people who have dealt with them in the past, and people who have never experienced bed bugs. We are dedicated to helping community members who need it most, and sharing your experience will be extremely helpful to develop strategies to reduce the bed bug problems.

English version of Bed Bug survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DGLQS52>

Spanish version of Bed Bug survey: <https://es.surveymonkey.com/s/F5NZXJK>

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Master Class Webinar Series Continues

As part of EPA's ongoing effort to continue the momentum to create healthy school indoor environments in all of our nation's schools, the agency is pleased to announce the launching of a new **IAQ Master Class Webinar Series**.

In June 2014, the School Health and Indoor Environments Leadership Development (SHIELD) Network began designing ten 1-hour technical core-competency web-based trainings intended to build the capacity of school district staff across the country to start, improve, or sustain an IAQ management program.

The webinars will feature technical experts, industry leaders and model school districts from the SHIELD Network. CEU's are pending and certificates of completion will be provided to all who complete the post-training evaluation.

Mark your calendar to join the Master Class Technical Webinar Series. Schedule below.

Webinar Topic	Webinar Date
Asthma Management	5/14/15
Cleaning and Maintenance	6/04/15
Materials Selection	7/16/15
Source Control	8/06/15

May 14, 2015, 1:00-2:30 p.m. Eastern / 10:00-11:30 p.m. Arizona: [Managing Asthma for Improved Health and Academic Outcomes](#)

Upcoming Webinars and Events

Attend Free Sessions of the [Green Strides Webinar Series](#). View archived webinars [here](#).

The [Green Strides Webinar Series](#) provides school communities the tools to reduce their schools' environmental impact and costs; improve health and wellness; and teach effective environmental literacy, including STEM, green careers, and civic engagement.

School IPM Webinar Series: EPA's Center of Expertise for School IPM will host a series of webinars in the coming months on pest management topics of special interest to the school community. These monthly webinars feature presentations from experts in the field. Find information about these webinars: <http://www.epa.gov/pestwise/events/sipm-webinars.html>

May 19, 2015, 2:00-3:30 p.m. Eastern / 11:00-12:30 p.m. Arizona: [Keeping Your School Free of Stinging Insects](#)

June 5, 2015, [24th Annual Desert Horticulture Conference](#), JW Marriott Starr Pass, 3800 W Starr Pass, Tucson, AZ 85745

The Desert Horticulture Conference is the premier annual conference for all members of the southwest green industry: landscape architects, designers, growers, retailers, contractors, maintenance personnel, suppliers, and educators. Presenting timely and research-based information relevant for designing, building, maintaining, and producing plants for urban landscapes in the arid Southwest. Please visit the website at <http://cals.arizona.edu/deserthort/>.

For more information about the EPA Schools program, visit:
<http://www.epa.gov/schools/>

For more information about the Community IPM, visit:
<http://www.extension.org/pages/23359/urban-integrated-pest-management-community-page>



For more information about School IPM in Arizona, visit:
<http://cals.arizona.edu/apmc/westernschoolIPM.html>

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