

Coconut Whitefly

Coconut Whitefly (*Aleurodicus destructor*)



It will certainly not be difficult to identify this pest as the larval and pupal stages of this insect produce long glass-like or filamentous white rods that look like hardened cotton threads which can be up to 2-3 cm long on the underside of the leaves.

This sap-sucker is a major pest of important horticultural crops throughout the Caribbean and South Asia and Pacific areas as well as impacting upon an extensive range of ornamental trees.

This pest is not technically a fly but is actually a bug (Order: Hemiptera) and obviously received its name from the characteristic white winged adult insect.

Damage is caused by the sap-sucking immature and adult whiteflies and these feed almost exclusively on the underside of the leaves. Sooty mould will often occur with a heavy infestation. Leaf damage can result in a loss of photosynthate and health issues and very severe infestation can lead to defoliation.

Contact insecticides are difficult to apply given the location of the infestation and while systemic insecticides such as Confidor® may offer better control, the larval and pupal cases are still attached to the leaves which remain particularly unsightly.

More information can be obtained from CSIRO Entomology.

www.ento.csiro.au



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