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ROOT MEALYBUG

SCIENTIFIC NAMES: Ground Mealbug: *Rhioecus falcifer* Kunckel d’Hercularis; Pritchard’s Mealbug: *Rhioecus pritchardi* McKenie

CLASS: Insecta

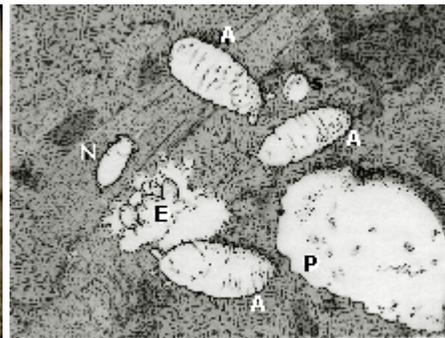
ORDER: Hemiptera

FAMILY: Pseudococcidae



Ground Mealbug Nymphs

From: [Univerisit of California](#)



A. Adults
N. Nymph

E. Eggs
P. Partide of Perlite

Life Ccle

From: [NC E“tension](#)

DESCRIPTION

Adult Females: The ground mealbug is white and 2.4 to 3.9 millimeters long. It resembles a springtail, but moves much more slowl and cannot jump. The ground mealbug has slender wa“ filaments that form a sort of netting over some individuals. The ground mealbug also secretes a small amount of wa“, which can give the soil a somewhat bluish appearance when the mealbugs are abundant. Pritchard’s mealbug is snow white and 1.6 to 2.1 millimeters long and oval. It has small to non-e“istent ees.

BIOLOGY

Host Plants: The ground mealbug feeds on the roots of anemone, chrsanthemum, gladiolus, iris, and numerous other flowers, shrubs, and ornamental grasses. Pritchard’s mealbug has become a serious pest of African violet, although it also infests *Achillea*, *Arctostaphlos*, *Geum*, and *Polgala*.

Damage: At times the ground mealbug becomes abundant enough to damage its host. Pritchard’s mealbug causes devitaliation, foliage deterioration, and even death of its host plant.

Life Ccle: Little has been published on the life histor of root mealbugs. When infested African violets are irrigated, Pritchard’s mealbugs crawl out of the drainage holes and spread throughout the greenhouse. Eggs are laid in a loose ovisac in clusters of at least si“ eggs. All stages can be found on the roots and potting mi“ of

African violets where the resemble slow moving, snow white collembola.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Pesticides: Pesticides applied as dips, drenches, or granules are more effective for root mealbug control than are foliar sprays. For specific chemical control recommendations, consult the [Cooperative Extension Service](#).

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