

Fact sheet

Persea mite

What is Persea mite?

Persea mite (*Oligonychus perseae*) is a serious pest with a wide host range that causes defoliation of avocado trees in California.

What does it look like?

Adults grow to approximately 0.5 mm in size. Females have an oval-shaped body that is slightly flattened, and is yellowish green in colour with several small dark spots located in the abdominal region. The male is smaller than the female and has a pear-shaped body that is slightly flattened and yellowish in colour. Occasionally, it has small dark spots in the abdominal region. Old females are dark green in colour, inactive, and the body is reduced in size.

Immature stages are yellowish or greenish in colour, with two or more small dark spots in the abdominal region.

What can it be confused with?

Persea mites look similar to the Six-spotted mites (*Eotetranychus sexmaculatus*) which are present in Australia and also feed on the underside of leaves. However, Six-spotted mite colonies do not form densely layered web canopies, and Persea mites prefer to feed adjacent to the midrib and large lateral veins causing irregular purplish, necrotic spotting.

What should I look for?

Look for nests that are formed along midribs and veins on the undersides of leaves. Symptoms of leaf damage can also be seen as necrotic spots covered with protective webbing. Upper leaf surfaces have a yellow spotting pattern. As Persea mite populations increase, feeding damage causes leaves to drop. A heavily infested tree will have a litter of yellow-spotted leaves on the ground.



Discrete circular necrotic spots can be seen on leaves

Scott Nelson, University of Hawaii



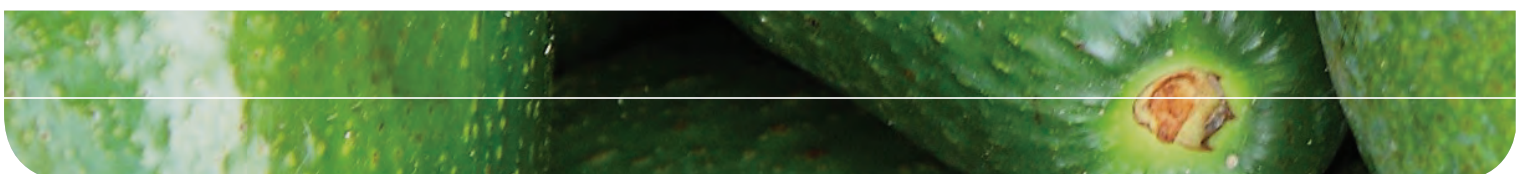
Feeding on upper leaf surfaces causes a yellow spotting pattern.

Scott Nelson, University of Hawaii



Leaf drop may occur in heavy infestations

Scott Nelson, University of Hawaii





The mite is most damaging to the cv. Hass, but it also attacks cvs. Gwen and Reed. Fewer symptoms are seen on Mexican varieties such as Fuerte, Bacon and Zutano.

How does it spread?

Persea mites can be dispersed by wind, and on infested plants.

Where is it now?

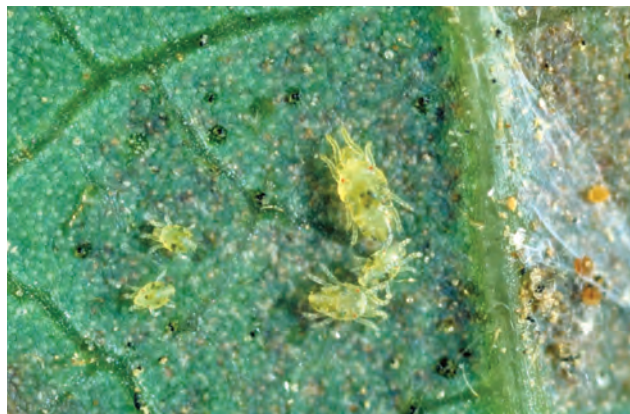
Persea mite occurs in most avocado-growing areas of California except the Central Valley.

How can I protect my orchard from Persea mite?

Source plant material only from clean, accredited suppliers, and preferably material that is certified. Check your orchard frequently for the presence of new pests and unusual symptoms. Make sure you are familiar with common avocado insect pests so you can tell if you see something different.

If you see anything unusual, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline

**EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881**



Immature stages are yellowish or greenish in colour

Jack Kelly Clark, University of California Statewide IPM Project

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