

PEST ALERT

FDACS-P-02265

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Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Plant Industry

***Bambusaspis coronata* (Green), a bamboo pit scale intercepted in north central Florida**

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INTRODUCTION

In November 2025, a potted bamboo, *Bambusa tuldoidea* Munro (Poaceae), hosting specimens of a small yet distinctly ornate pit scale insect, was submitted to FDACS-DPI for identification (11032025-11388). The bamboo originated from a nursery in Hawthorne, Florida, where it had been maintained for several years, with divisions sold as *Bambusa ventricosa* 'Kimmei'. Recognized immediately as alien to Florida's scale insect fauna, specimens were slide mounted for examination. The pit scale was identified as *Bambusaspis coronata* (Green), a bamboo-specialist species originally described from Sri Lanka and currently known from China, Japan, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and the Bonin Islands south of Japan (García Morales et al. 2016). This species has not been recorded in the Western Hemisphere and FDACS-DPI had no prior interceptions. Additional specimens were subsequently collected by DPI inspector Vincent Barrios from several plants in the same nursery (11072025-11590). The pest status of *B. coronata* is poorly documented and its pest potential unknown. However, other invasive *Bambusaspis* Cockerell can be major pests in Florida, namely *Bambusaspis miliaris* (Boisduval).

SURVEY AND IDENTIFICATION

This ornamented scale insect was found feeding on the adaxial (topside) of leaves along the midvein (Figs. 1–2) and on the stems around the nodes, typically exposed but sometimes settled beneath the sheath scar (Fig. 2a). The test, or wax scale cover, of this scale insect measures 0.8–1.0 mm in length and 0.65–0.85 mm in width. The test of the adult female is reddish brown in color with 10 projections of wax protruding laterally away from the body, a wide triangular orange or pink base narrowing to a thin translucent filament that is easily broken off (Figs. 1–2). Immatures (nymphs) also have distinctive wax projections (Figs. 1–2). *Bambusaspis coronata* is nearly impossible to see with the naked eye, requiring a loupe or a dissecting scope for proper examination. It blends in particularly well with discoloration from bamboo rust fungus and patchy chlorotic damage from other scales that may be present. *Bambusaspis coronata* is distinct from all other species of pit scales in Florida both in life and as slide-mounted specimens. The other four *Bambusaspis* species present in Florida have a light brown, transparent test with no wax filaments arising from the body. Slide-mounted specimens are distinct from other species of *Bambusaspis* because of the conspicuous clusters of dorsal eight-shaped pores that form the wax projections and the abdominal apex strongly narrowed and produced (Russell 1941) (Fig. 3).

Bambusaspis coronata was found in mixed infestation with an abundance of *B. miliaris* (Boisduval), which was primarily infesting the abaxial (underside) of leaves and responsible for the majority of the damage to the plant. Also present were specimens of a third bamboo pit scale, *Bambusaspis bambusae* (Cockerell), a bamboo mealybug *Palmicultor lumpurensis* (Takahashi), and a bamboo-specialist armored scale *Odonaspis greenii* Cockerell. All are known pests of bamboo in Florida.

This is the second species of adventive *Bambusaspis* detected within a year in Florida. *Bambusaspis minuta* (Takahashi) was discovered in the landscape in September 2024 (Powell et al. 2024) and has now been reported from five Florida counties (Brevard, Indian River, Orange, Polk and St. Lucie). The abundance of invasive scale insect species present on bamboo in Florida highlights bamboo as a high-risk commodity requiring careful inspection. Specimens should be sent to DPI's Entomology section for positive identification. Forms and instructions for sample submission can be found at www.FDACS.gov/DPIsamples.



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

REFERENCES

- García Morales, M., Denno, B.D., Miller, D.R., Miller, G.L., Ben-Dov, Y. and Hardy, N.B. (2016).** ScaleNet: A literature-based model of scale insect biology and systematics. Database. doi:10.1093/database/bav118. <http://scalenet.info>.
- Powell, E.C., Deeter, L.A. and Miller, D.R. (2024).** *Bambusaspis minuta* (Takahashi), a bamboo pit scale detected in central Florida. Pest Alert (Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Plant Industry) FDACS-P-02226.
- Russell, L.M. (1941).** A classification of the scale insect genus *Asterolecanium*. United States Department of Agriculture, Miscellaneous Publications 424: 1–319.



Figure 1. *Bambusaspis coronata* (Green) adult female and first-instar nymphs feeding on the midvein of a potted *Bambusa tuldoidea* Munro. Photo by Lyle Buss, University of Florida.

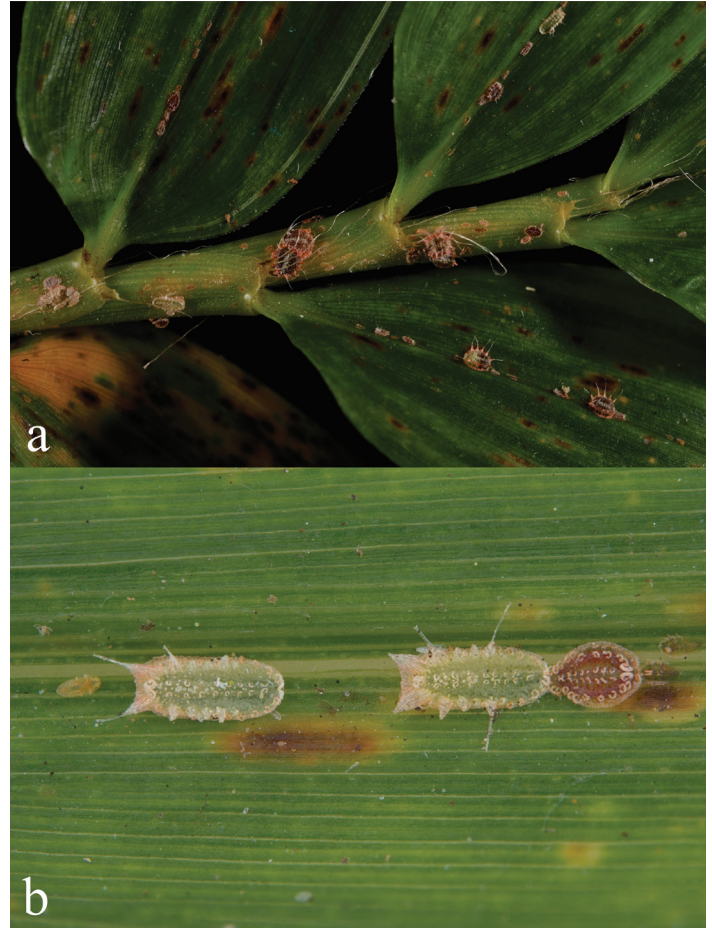


Figure 2. *Bambusaspis coronata* (Green) (a) adult females and nymphs on the leaves and stems and (b) nymphs on the leaves.

Photo (a) by Erin C. Powell, FDACS-DPI and (b) by Lyle Buss, University of Florida.



Figure 3. A slide-mounted *Bambusaspis coronata* (Green) adult female collected from Hawthorne, Florida, USA.

Photo by Erin C. Powell, FDACS-DPI.