

Pest Alert

FDACS-P-01698

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry
Charles H. Bronson, Commissioner of Agriculture

Red gum lerp psyllid, *Glycaspis brimblecombei*

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INTRODUCTION: The red gum lerp psyllid, *Glycaspis brimblecombei* Moore, was found in Florida for the first time in April 2001 at Lake Buena Vista. It is a serious pest of several species of Eucalyptus, causing defoliation and eventual death of trees. The current known infestation is limited to Orange County and includes several residential properties. Only Eucalyptus is affected. The pest is native to Australia and was introduced into California several years ago. It is likely that the Florida infestation came from California via movement of infested plants.

APPEARANCE: A red gum lerp psyllid infestation is very easy to recognize because the nymphs construct individual nests called lerps. Each nymph lives under its own white semi-conical waxy lerp. Adults are not as readily observed because they are active and tend to hide in leaves. They are winged, less than 1/4 inch long, and are either green or yellow in color. Eggs are bright yellow-orange and laid either in lines or clusters on either surface of the leaves. Psyllids are sucking insects that feed by drawing sap from plants. A full-blown infestation is very messy. The lerps and honeydew (excrement) from the insects are sticky and support copious mold growth. Sticky leaves fall from the trees and can be tracked into buildings, creating problems for carpets and other flooring. Further information can be found at the University of California Web site (<http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/biocon/dahlsten/rglp/>).

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND RED GUM LERP PSYLLID: Infestations in Florida may be reported to the local Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry (DPI) inspectors. Options for pesticide treatment are limited due to the usual size of infested trees. University of California extension has some cultural management recommendations that may save some trees (see Web site above). University of California is also working on biological control options. When parasites from Australia become available, DPI will determine whether release is



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Adam H. Putnam, Commissioner



Infestation on many leaves.
Photo credit: Susan Halbert



Adult, nymphs, and lerp on a leaf.
Photo credit: Jeffrey Lotz



Close-up of nymph and old lerp.
Photo credit: Jeffrey Lotz