PEST ALERT

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Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Division of Plant Industry

Aceria litchii (Keiffer, 1943), lychee erinose mite

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INTRODUCTION

A pest of lychee, *Aceria litchii* (Keiffer, 1943), known as lychee erinose mite (LEM), has a distribution that is currently limited to the following counties within Florida: Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Collier, Hendry, Lee, Manatee, Martin, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, Pinellas and Sarasota. The following counties are no longer positive for LEM: Orange, Highlands and St. Lucie.

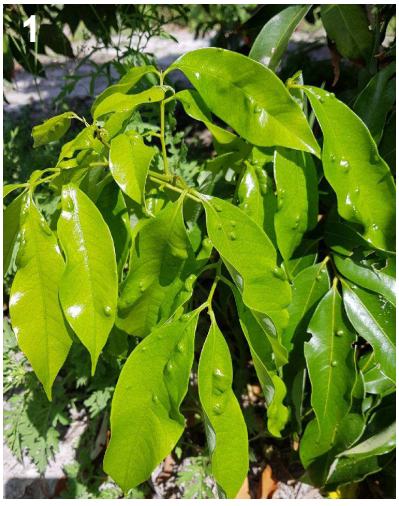
This mite causes erineum galls, abnormal growths covered in fine hairs, to form on leaves, which later become reddish-brown with a velvety appearance. This damage can initially appear superficial, but as the numbers of the mite increase, damage spreads to the fruits and flowers.

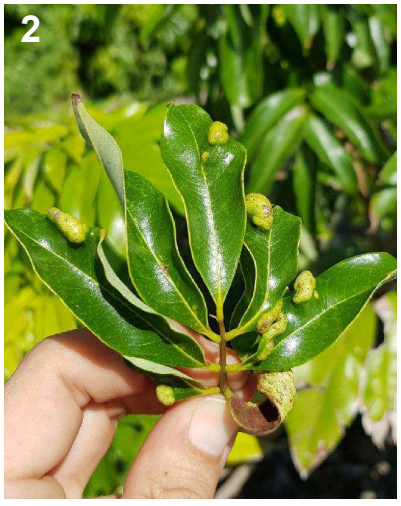
IDENTIFICATION

This mite is too small to observe directly without a microscope, but its presence can be readily detected by the erineum galls on the surface of leaves (Figs. 1 and 2) or by the reddish-brown underside of the leaves (Fig. 3). Damage also typically includes curling of the leaves. The Division of Plant Industry should be contacted (DPIHelpline@FDACS.gov or 1-888-397-1517) if these symptoms are noticed on any lychee leaves.

HOSTS

The lychee erinose mite is a major pest of lychee (*Litchi chinensis*) in many countries, including Australia, Brazil, and much of South Asia.





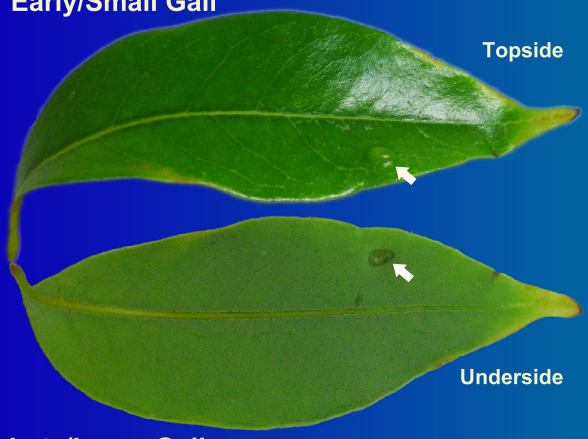
Figs. 1 and 2: Erinea on leaves. **Fig. 3:** Leaves attacked by this erinose mite eventually develop a reddish-brown underside.

IDENTIFICATION SHEET

Symptoms of the Lychee Erinose Mite

The lychee erinose mite *(Aceria litchii)*, which is too small to see without a microscope, can be detected from the galls that it forms on lychee, and possibly also longan. The earliest symptom is often a single, tiny gall on a single lychee leaf. Large galls arise later, once the level of infestation is greater. Regardless of size, galls change color and visibillity as they mature (see overleaf).

Early/Small Gall



Late/Large Gall

Gall Maturity

Stage	Topside	Underside
1	Not detectable at this stage	Dark green patch with low density of white hairs
2	Slight bulge; not yet any browning	Dark green patch with moderate density of white hairs
3	Prominent bulge; some browning can occur at this stage	High density of amber hairs, obscuring dark green surface
4	Prominent, brown, hard bulge	High density of dark brown hairs

Additional Note: Care should be taken not to spread lychee erinose mites. Before leaving a site, any items, skin and clothing that contact an infected lychee plant should be disinfected with alcohol.