

Citrus Mealybug Pest Memo

March 2025



Citrus mealybug is becoming a challenging pest to manage. It's a soft-scale insect that feeds by sucking sap. Its life cycle starts as crawlers produced by overwintering females from the previous season. As they hatch, crawlers move to a new flush and then to fruit, where they feed and multiply. As the season progresses, 2nd to 5th generations settle and multiply on fruit. Mealybug prefers an inner canopy environment and is usually found between clusters and under the calyces of growing fruit.

How to tell that you may have a mealybug infestation?



Sooty mold, white mealy wax, and mealybugs on fruit, especially between cluster or under calyces

Adults, eggs sacs and mealy wax on trunk

1st instars (top photo)
eggs inside egg sac
(bottom photo) on leaf

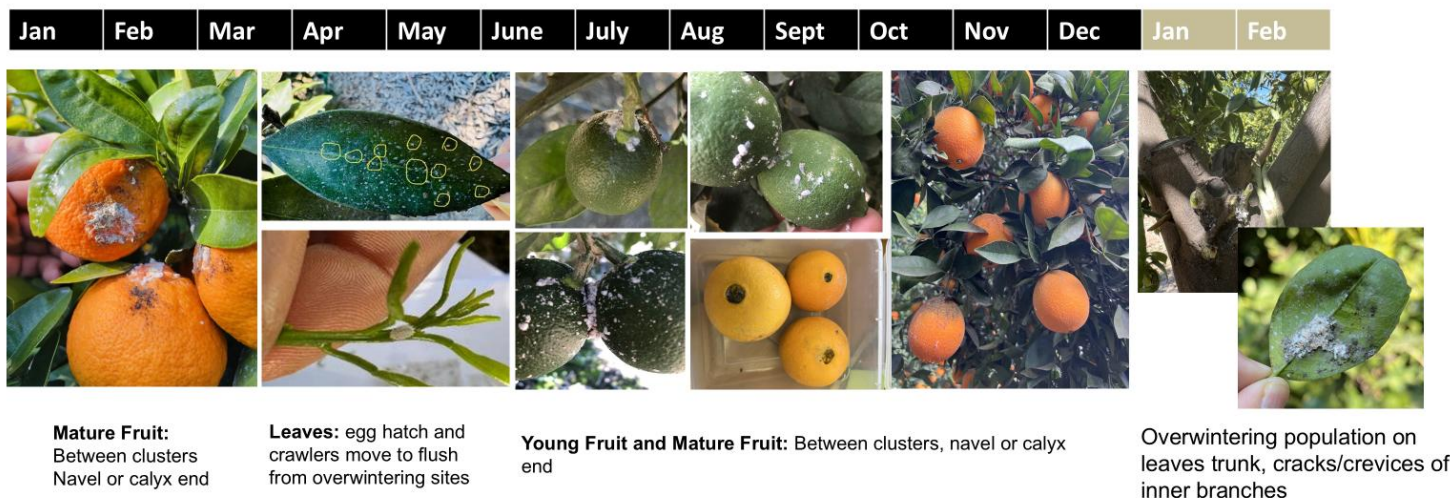
What's happening with the SJV CMB population in late March?

- Crawlers and immatures from overwintering females are starting to move to new flush and feed.
- Check for females with egg sacs on suckers, trunk and inner branches.
- Sooty mold-covered leaves and the presence of ants are indicators of CMB presence.
- Males can be monitored using a pheromone lure and trap.
- First-generation male flight begins in the first week of April. Depending on temperature, crawlers emerge after 4-5 weeks in spring and 2-3 weeks in summer.



How to scout for CMB as the season progresses?

Because mealybugs move, scouting monitoring is season-dependent!



- **January to March** –CMB overwinters in protected areas. Check inside the tree canopy, fruit (if present) or leaves (with signs of sooty mold) for overwintering adults, egg sacs, and crawlers.
- **April to June** – crawlers emerge and start moving into new flush or fruit. Egg masses, crawlers on branches & flush, and under the calyxes.
- **July to December** – CMB feed and multiply on fruit. Overlapping generations can be present.

CMB Management Guidelines

- If your block has a history of infestation in the previous season
 - Heavy populations can be treated as immatures hatch from overwintering females in 2nd/3rd week of March
 - As season progresses, monitor and treat if necessary, target the first-generation crawlers in April, and second-generation crawlers in late June/early July.
- Use selective insecticides that allow natural enemies to survive when you can.
- Tank-mix of IGR product with insecticide or two applications of different AI within 2-3 weeks may be necessary.
- Plan for a thorough coverage: 750-1000 gpa/acre, drive slowly! < 1.5 mph (2.4 kph).
- Manage ants.

Links to pesticide trial reports and other resources on CMB

- [CMB trial 2022-1](#)
- [CMB trial 2022-2](#)
- [CMB trial 2023-1](#)
- [Testing insecticide efficacy – Citrograph Article \(pp 64\)](#)
- [Core IPM Updates – Citrograph article pp 54](#)

Share your thoughts on what info would you like to see on pest memos. [Click the link](#) for a quick survey.