What is it?

It is an insect that attacks many crops in addition to peach. In Solomon Islands, it is common on chilli, cassava and sliperi kabis. The scientific name is Pseudaulacaspis.

Damage

The female scales feed on plant sap, using their long mouthparts. Males do not feed. Leaves turn yellow, fruits are smaller than normal and plants become stunted (cassava). With heavy infestations branches die and whole plants die back (chilli, bell pepper).

How do I identify it?

Look for thick white crusts on stems or tree trunks. Leaves and fruits are not usually infested. The females (photo, left) and males (photo, right) that make up a heavy infestation are easy to recognize. Some farmers say they look like fungus.

How do manage white peach scale

Cultural control

• Cut out stems of plants infested by white peach scale and burn them;
• DO NOT plant cuttings from plants infested with white peach scale;
• DO NOT plant new crops downwind from those infested with white peach scale, as the young scales, known as crawlers, will spread on the wind to the new crop.

Chemical control

• Use soap sprays (5 tablespoons soap in 4 litres water); or white oil (1 cup cooking oil; 2 cups water; 1 teaspoon dishwashing liquid). Dilute the mixture 6 teaspoons per litre of water and spray on the infested parts (see also Horticultural oil in Fact Sheet no. 56d). The addition of malathion (2 ml/litre water) is useful.
• Use synthetic pyrethroids (for example, lambda cyhalothrin or cypermethrin). These are useful against crawlers.