Recognize the problem
Broad mites, or yellow tea mites, are too small (less than 0.2 mm) to be detected by naked eyes. An attack by broad mites can only be detected by the symptoms of damage. They may damage the young stems of terminal leaves or shoots. The damaged tender leaves get twisted, fail to grow longer and die in the long run. Their feeding leads to death of tissues, discolouration (bronzing), deformation and swelling. Severely affected fruits that set may fall off the plant. The fruits that don’t fall may be deformed and develop everlasting tan marks on the skin. Symptoms remain for a long period of time after control. The internal quality of fruits is not affected, however their marketability is.

Background
Broad mites do not like wet conditions. They are mobile and can spread to neighbouring plants. They can be spread by human movement in a farm, farm tools or by wind. They cling on to old crop and weeds for a long time. There are some species of mites that feed on the broad mite.

Management
Non-chemical control
• Introduce mites that feed on broad mites in the farm, such as Amblyseius spp., in particular Amblyseius californicus.
• Movement of labour and tools in the field should be controlled.

Chemical
• Use sulphur based sprays. Sulphur is, however, harmful to mites that feed on broad mites and also burns young foliage at high dosage.
• Other chemicals to use for control include Abamectin, Bifenthrin and Dicofol.

When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.

Scientific name(s) > Polyphagotarsonemus latus

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Australia, Kenya, Philippines, South Africa

When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.