

# Cotton Mealybug

## Recognize the problem

In Pakistan, mealybugs first appeared in 2005. By 2007, they had attacked 40% of the cotton area in Punjab. Mealybugs are oval-shaped with a white powdery waxy layer on the body, while their young do not have a waxy protection. Males have wings. Females produce many eggs and lay them on leaves and terminal branches. Mealybugs attack terminal branches, leaves and stems. During a severe attack, the whole plant wilts and dies. Damage occurs in patches in the field.

## Background

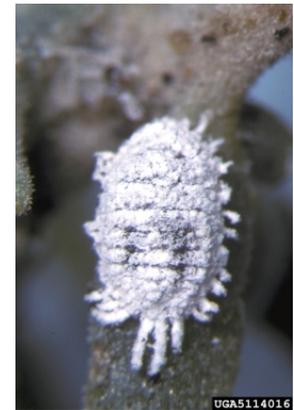
The mealybug has a wide range of hosts, including lady finger, brinjal, ornamental plants and weeds. Adults and young weaken plants by sucking sap from the leaves, twigs, roots and fruiting bodies. Mealybugs may attack anytime during the season, and can survive on alternate host plants like Anthurium, rose of China, Abutilon, tomato and potato.

## Management

- Weeding should be done throughout the whole year to remove alternate hosts
- Remove cotton sticks from the field before 31st January
- Encourage natural enemies: ladybird beetles, spiders and parasitic wasps
- At initial stages, mealybugs appear in small patches in the field, so apply insecticides only on the infested parts
- If required, apply a chemical, such as:
  - Use profenofos 800ml/acre at the time of attack, no more than twice
  - Spray imidacloprid 250ml per acre at the time of attack, no more than twice with knapsack sprayer
  - Dimethoate 200ml per acre, no more than twice

Note: imidacloprid and dimethoate can have non-target effects (including against bees). Wear rubber gloves and shoes while handling insecticides. Keep your mouth and nose covered with mask and do not eat, drink or smoke while using insecticides. Dispose of used Bottles.

Adult mealybug. (Photo by US National Collection of Scale Insects Photographs Archive, ARS-USDA (CC BY-NC))



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) > *Phenacoccus solenopsis*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Pakistan

Authors: Muhammad Naeem Aslam, Muhammad Hasnain, and Ashiq  
Department of Plantwise CABI Central and West Asia  
tel: +92-333-6202122 email: n.aslam@cabi.org

Edited by Plantwise.