

Mango Mealybug

Recognize the problem

Mango mealybug is one of the most important insect pests of mango. The mealybug feeds on the tree, and produces droppings which make the leaves black and sticky. This lowers the strength of the tree, and its production of mangoes. During heavy attack, a whole part of the tree looks blackish in colour. This insect pest lowers the yield and quality of the mango and can go from one tree to another, if the trees are touching. Young mealybugs are brown in colour. Females are about half the size of your small nail, do not have wings and are covered with white wax. Male adults are brick red, winged and smaller than the wingless female.

Mango mealy bugs. (Photo by Dr. Sandeep Singh, PAU, Ludhiana via NBAII)



Background

Young insects and adult females suck the sap from twigs, leaves, flowers and fruit from January to June. A single female mealybug will go from the tree to the soil and will lay many eggs in the soil, about as deep as your little finger under the tree canopy near the trunk during July to August. They hatch during December and January and then go to feed on the weeds. They can travel up the mango tree either via the trunk or using branches touching the ground.

Management

- Hoe the soil under the tree canopy in November to expose and destroy the eggs
- Remove the weeds in the orchard in December to January, especially under tree canopy
- Put slippery, 1 foot wide bands of polyethylene around the trunk, 3 feet above the ground. Apply grease or any other sticky material on the band for better control of insects
- Cut any branches that touch the ground or that are touching any nearby plants/trees
- Check 100 leaves on 5 different trees in an acre. If mealybugs are found on 5 of the 100 leaves checked, chemical control should be applied: spray only the affected tree using pressure sprayers with carbosulfan and imidacloprid at the recommended dose

Note: Imidacloprid can have non-target effects. Use protective clothing, goggles, mask and gumboots during the pesticide spray. Do not eat and smoke during the spray. Wash hands, eyes and exposed parts of the body after the spray.

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.

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Pakistan



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