

## Giant pine scale

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Plant Biosecurity & Product Integrity

Giant pine scale (*Marchalina hellenica*) is a plant pest which was found in metropolitan Melbourne and Adelaide in November 2014

A national panel concluded that it is not technically feasible to eradicate giant pine scale

Giant pine scale is not present in New South Wales

If found in NSW it must be reported promptly to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline **1800 084 881**

### Giant pine scale

Giant pine scale (*Marchalina hellenica*) is a scale insect that sucks the sap of pine trees.

Excess sap is excreted from the scale as honeydew which ants and bees gather for food. In Greece bees are farmed for this honeydew to produce a speciality honey called pine honey.

Giant pine scale is harmless to people and pets.

### Description

Adult giant pine scale is 7 to 11 mm long and 3 to 5 mm wide and is covered by a fluffy white waxy coat (Figure 2).

When giant pine scale is present in very large numbers on a pine tree the white waxy coat gives the appearance of snow (Figure 1).

### What to look for

The most obvious sign of giant pine scale is the fluffy white wax covering which it produces. The wax is generally seen on the trunk and lower branches.



Figure 1 Pine tree infested with giant pine scale. White fluffy wax is clearly visible.



Figure 2 Magnified giant pine scale.

## Damage

Heavy infestations of giant pine scale may result in defoliation of the host tree and eventual tree death.

## Spread

Giant pine scale has low mobility and adults are wingless. Crawlers only move short distances on the host tree. Some local spread may occur by ants harvesting the eggs of giant pine scale.

Long distance spread is by human assisted movement of infested pine branches, needles and cones.

## Host trees

In Australia giant pine scale has been found on Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*) and on radiata pine also called Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*).

Overseas, giant pine scale is found on pines (*Pinus*), firs (*Abies*) and spruces (*Picea*).

## Distribution

Giant pine scale is native to pine forests in the eastern Mediterranean region, specifically Greece and Turkey.

Giant pine scale was found in metropolitan Melbourne and Adelaide in November 2014.

Giant pine scale is not present in New South Wales.

## Actions to minimise risk

Put in place biosecurity best practice actions to prevent entry, establishment and spread of pests and diseases:

- practice “Come clean, Go clean”
- ensure all staff and visitors are instructed in and adhere to your business management hygiene requirements
- source propagation material of a known high health status from reputable suppliers
- keep records

## Reporting

If you suspect giant pine scale:

Call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on  
**1800 084 881**

Take photos (not samples) to report and minimise the risk of spreading this pest

Email clear photos with a brief explanation and contact details to

[biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

A **plant pest** is a disease causing organism or an invertebrate which threatens agricultural production, forestry or native and amenity plants.

## Acknowledgments

Figure 1 Victorian Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources

Figure 2 Andrea Battisti, Universita di Padova, Bugwood.org

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