



## *Mealybugs on Taxus*

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**T**axus (yew) in nursery and landscape plantings is infested by two species of mealybugs: the Taxus mealybug and the grape mealybug. Plant injury from mealybugs occurs when immatures and adults insert their stylet into the cells of the twigs and remove the contents. Mealybugs generally infest twig crotches on interior portions of Taxus. Due to the very dense branching habit of the host, infestations often go unnoticed until the plant begins to decline. Severely infested plants exhibit sparse, chlorotic foliage, poor growth and twig and branch dieback. The foliage and twigs usually are covered with honeydew and sooty mold.

### **TAXUS MEALYBUG**

The Taxus mealybug (*Dysmicoccus wistariae* Green) occurs in most northeastern and central states. In addition to Taxus, this pest will feed on Rhododendron, maple, linden, dogwood and other woody plants.

Adult females are the most conspicuous stage of the pest. Females are oval, hemispherical and eight to ten mm long and five mm wide. The body is red in color and covered with white, waxy secretions. White, waxy filaments also extend from the edge of the body. Body segments are obvious beneath the waxy covering. Males are minute, white, two-winged insects. Immatures (nymphs) closely resemble scale crawlers. This stage is minute, light yellow to brown with smooth bodies.



**Mealybug on Taxus**

The Taxus mealybug overwinters on the bark as an immature. In spring, it resumes feeding and matures in June. Adults are present in June through August. Following mating, the female bears living young. The immatures feed until the onset of winter, when it overwinters under bark scales or beneath the waxy covering of a dead female. One generation occurs each year.

### **GRAPE MEALYBUG**

This mealybug (*Pseudococcus maritimus* Ehrhorn) occurs primarily in the central and



**Taxus infested with Mealybug**

western states. In addition to Taxus, the grape mealybug feeds on many other woody plants, particularly grape; and rosaceous plants. Herbaceous ornamentals also may be infested.

Adult females of the grape mealybug resemble those of the Taxus mealybug except the former is somewhat smaller. Fully-grown females are approximately six mm long and three mm wide. Immatures and adult males of the grape mealybug also resemble those of the Taxus mealybug.

In early spring, immatures of the grape mealybug begin feeding and complete development by mid-June. Adults mate and the female deposits eggs in masses of white, waxy secretions. Eggs hatch by mid-July and the second-generation immatures begin feeding. This generation completes development in late summer or early fall, when adults mate and lay eggs.

This species overwinters as an egg or as an immature if the eggs hatch during warm fall weather. Two generations occur each year.

#### **PEST MANAGEMENT**

Infestations of the Taxus and grape mealybugs can be maintained at low levels with horticultural oil applied in the dormant season, or with contact or systemic insecticides applied in late-May through early-June to control the Taxus mealybug immatures and first generation of the grape mealybug. A second application is necessary in late-July to control the second generation of the grape mealybug. Insecticide sprays should be directed to interior portions of the plant to ensure a high degree of control. Consult the Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories Insect Control Recommendations or local state guidelines for specific insecticides and rates labeled for control of these pests.