

Pest Profile



Photo credit: [Frank Vincentz](#)

Common Name: Cochineal scale

Scientific Name: *Dactylopius coccus*

Order and Family: Hemiptera: Coccidae

Size and Appearance:

| | Length (mm) | Appearance |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Egg | Minute | |
| Larva/Nymph | >1mm | Minute and pink in color. Nymphs have legs and are mobile for a short time before settling. |
| Adult | Females about 6mm, males much smaller | Females are soft bodied, flat, and oval shaped. Adults live in clusters and are purplish/black in color, but appear white due to a waxy, web-like material excreted to camouflage and prevent desiccation. Males are tiny, pink, and possess semitransparent wings. |
| Pupa (if applicable) | | |

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Piercing-sucking

Host plant/s: *Opuntia* spp. (prickly pear cacti)

Description of Damage (larvae and adults): White fluffy or waxy patches appear on cactus pads. Feeding sites may appear swollen and discolored. Eventually, affected portions will wither, turn brown and die.

References:

Klein, H. (2002). PPRI Leaflet Series: Weeds Biocontrol, No 2.2. ARC-Plant Protection Research Institute. Retrieved 7 March 2016, from < <http://www.arc.agric.za/arc-ppri/Fact%20Sheets%20Library/Cochineal%20insects%20Dactylopius%20spp.pdf>>.