

LOWVELD CITRUS MITE

Eutetranychus orientalis (Klein)

1 PEST PROFILE

1.1 Distribution and status

The Lowveld citrus mite (also known as the oriental spider mite) occurs mainly in the hot low-lying areas of Mpumalanga, Limpopo Province, Zimbabwe and Swaziland. It is primarily a pest of grapefruit but can also achieve pest status on Valencias and lemons. The mite probably originated from the Far East and is slowly spreading through southern Africa.

1.2 Description

The adult female is approximately the size of adult female citrus red mite, *Panonychus citri* (0.5 mm long). Her body is reddish-brown to dark green, oval, and has legs that are approximately equal in length to the body. Males are smaller than the females and their legs are longer than the body. The eggs are onion shaped, somewhat flattened and have an orange-yellow colour.

1.3 Infestation sites on tree

The lowveld citrus mite mainly infests foliage and fruit on the sunny side of the tree. The females usually lay their eggs on the dorsal side of the leaf along the midrib.

1.4 Damage

1.4.1 Symptoms

The feeding activities of the mites cause damage similar to that resulting from infestation by red mite. Refer to the latter pest for more information on damage symptoms.

1.4.2 Seasonal occurrence

Lowveld citrus mite populations begin to increase in early summer. Damage to foliage and fruit can commence at that time.

2 MANAGEMENT ASPECTS

2.1 Infestation/damage assessment

2.1.1 Inspection

Citrus orchards in affected areas must be examined at weekly intervals from October to autumn for the presence and possible increase of lowveld citrus mite populations.

2.1.2 Treatment threshold

A treatment will be required if more than 20% of leaves or fruit are infested and there is no obvious biocontrol.

2.2 Control options

2.2.1 Biological

Predatory mites can reduce lowveld citrus mite numbers significantly. *Typhlodromus praeacutus* van der Merwe in particular, is often associated with these mites. The predatory beetle, *Stethorus* spp., lacewing larvae and *Orius thripoborus* (Hesse), can also contribute to the suppression of this mite. When these natural enemies are eliminated with a chemical treatment an increase in the population of lowveld citrus mite may occur.

2.2.2 Cultural

There are no cultural measures that can contribute to the control of lowveld mite, although water stress should be avoided in hot weather.

2.2.3 Plant protection products

2.2.3.1 Spray treatment

The following products are registered for the control of lowveld citrus mite.

Product	Dosage/100 ℓ water
Envidor	10 ml
Torque	55 ml
Pride	50 ml
Smite	50 ml

2.2.3.2 Trunk treatment

Undiluted Citrimet applied to the trunks of citrus trees will suppress lowveld citrus mite. Refer to TRUNK APPLICATION PROCEDURE in Chapter 2 for more information.

Note

Several products registered for use against other citrus mite species have little impact on this pest. Agrimec plus oil as used for citrus thrips does suppress the pest, as do oil sprays applied during early summer for the control of red scale. However, this does not apply to Wenfinex, a very low molecular weight oil.