

Phenacoccus parvus



Phenacoccus parvus, a mealy bug, was introduced accidentally as a contaminant on imported plants. As it feeds on many different plants, it is not recommended as a biocontrol agent.

Origin

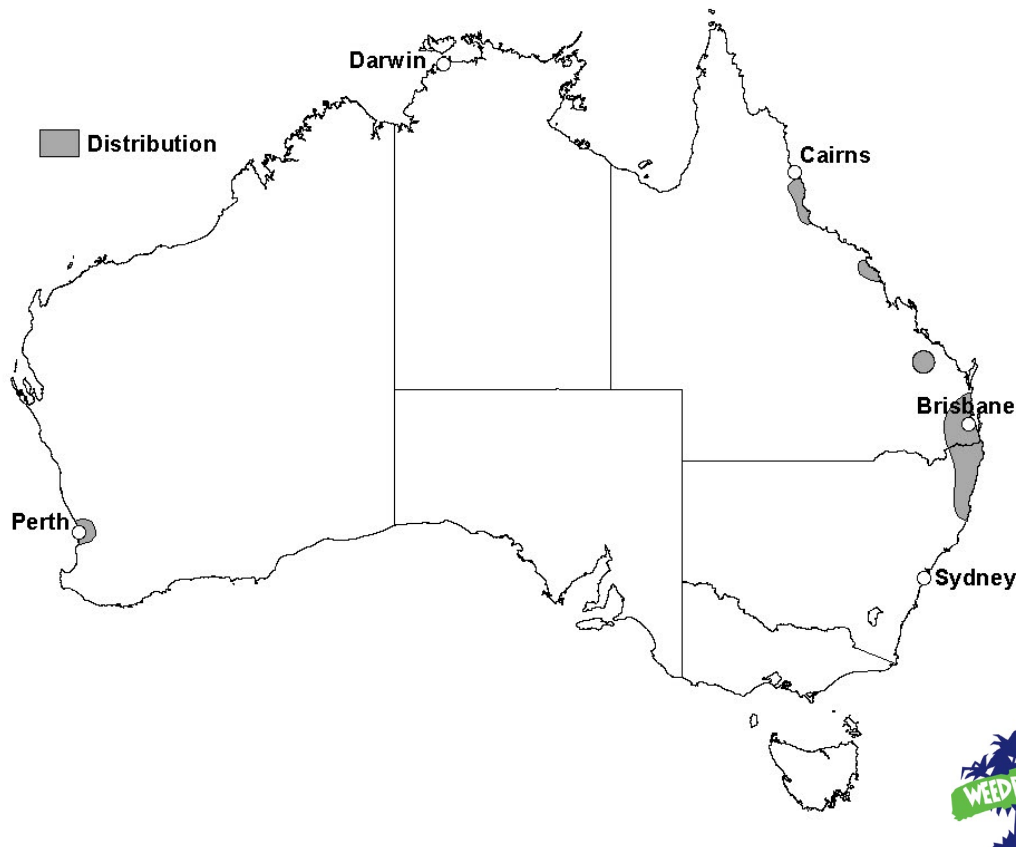
- *Phenacoccus parvus* occurs naturally in Mexico and Central America.
- The insect was introduced into Australia accidentally in 1988.

Biology

- Adults feed on the undersides of leaves and on green stems.
- Eggs are laid on the undersides of fully expanded, mature leaves.
- Crawlers prefer the undersides of mature leaves, and cluster along leaf veins.
- Development from egg to adult takes about 26 days.
- Adults live for about three months.

Australian distribution and impact on lantana

- *Phenacoccus parvus* is found in isolated populations from far north Queensland to central New South Wales, and around Perth.
- The bug is common in the drier regions of northern New South Wales and southern Queensland.
- Population numbers of *Phenacoccus parvus* increase during dry periods.
- The bug can cause immense damage to lantana, which become leafless and devoid of flowers and fruits.
- As economically important plants, such as tomato and eggplant, have been attacked, redistribution of the insect is not r



Note: Landholders are advised not to consume their time collecting this insect for distribution. This insect has been widely released and is now found in all areas which are climatically suitable. Due to its own ability to disperse, this insect will be periodically/seasonally present in areas that are climatically suitable for it.

This fact sheet is developed with funding support from the Land Protection Fund.

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