

Clover Mites

Clover mites (*Byrobia praetiosa*) are primarily nuisance pests but can be pests of turfgrass and some landscape plants. They can be pests of many types of plants, including turf, and can occasionally invade buildings. Typically, they are active from February through May until hot temperatures force them to lay eggs that will over-summer in protected exterior places. Once temperatures decline in fall, the eggs hatch and a new generation of mites will emerge.

What do they look like?

Clover mites are roughly the size of a pinhead and are described as moving dark spots, or small black or red spiders. They range in color from dark green to dark brown, to dark red. Their front legs are elongated, about twice the length of the other legs. Eggs are tiny, round, and red in color. Other mites and arthropods that could be misidentified as clover mites include other spider mites, Banks grass mite, predatory mites, bird/fowl mites, barklice, and springtails. When crushed, clover mites leave a red smudge.

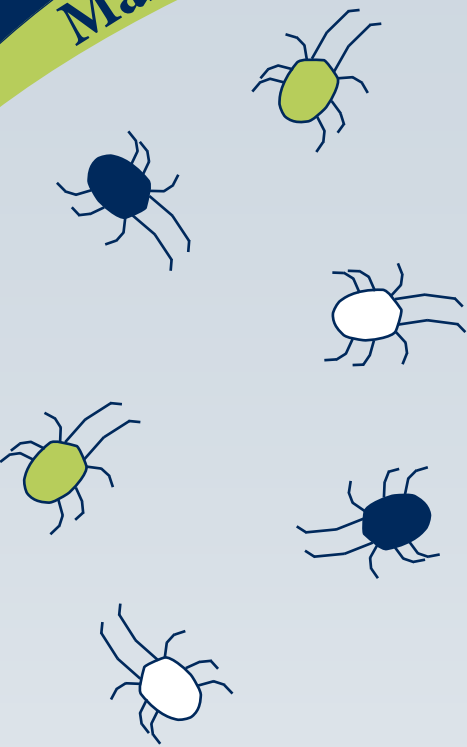
Symptoms

Clover mites are mostly a nuisance in school buildings. They can migrate indoors by the thousands in the spring alarming students and teachers. They most often enter structures through unsealed window sills, under doors, or any small crack or crevice leading in. While not dangerous, avoid smashing clover mites because they can stain fabric, etc.

Clover mites can injure many plants, but symptoms are most commonly seen on turfgrass, particularly in the spring months. Symptoms resemble drought-stress and show up on areas of the lawn that are particularly dry and sunny. Close inspection of grass blades shows silvery streaks. During severe infestations, patches of turf can be killed, especially close to south- and west-facing walls.

Did You Know?

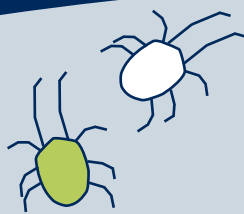
- Clover mites are a nuisance pest. They do not bite, transmit diseases, or feed on household furnishings or food products.
- In the spring, clover mites can migrate indoors by the thousands, causing alarm to teachers and students.
- Clover mites are inactive during the summer, but become active again in late fall (October and November).
- Clover mites can cause damage to turf outdoors next to walls or other “hot” places within turf areas.



Above:
Figure 1. Clover mite (**AUTHOR NAMEBugwood.org).

Right:
Figure 2. Mite damage on turf (extension.org).





Above:
Clover mite nymph molting (Left). Adult on a plant (Right) (Rayanne Lehman, Bugwood.org).



Managing Clover Mites with Integrated Pest Management

Controlling clover mites is best accomplished by habitat modification. Outside, clover mites can be reduced by the following:

- Focus control efforts on the south and west sides of buildings where clover mites are most likely to live and enter the home.
- Create a 1.5 to 3 foot wide vegetation-free zone around the foundation exterior.
- Seal cracks, crevices, windows, etc. prior to mite migration.
- Use supplemental water to drought-stressed areas of the lawn and where clover mites are present. Watering alone could greatly reduce the problem.
- Plant plants that are unattractive to clover mites, such as geranium, chrysanthemum, zinnia, marigold, salvia, rose, petunia or shrubs such as barberry, juniper and yew.
- Spray mites on exterior walls/windows with a garden hose.
- Only use pesticides when absolutely necessary for clover mites outdoors in turf and around buildings. Apply insecticides to turf within 10 feet of the foundation (e.g., bifenthrin or lambda-cyhalothrin). Pesticide resistance may occur in some clover mite populations.

Indoor Clover Mite Control

When clover mites invade indoor spaces they can be alarming. Clover mite migrations are usually a temporary nuisance, and usually only last a few days. Occasionally, longer migrations can occur. Indoors, insecticides are generally not recommended for controlling clover mites.

Techniques for controlling clover mites include:

- Vacuum all visible mites (do not crush mites).
- Wipe up mites with a soapy rag or wet sponge.
- Spray insecticidal soaps directly on mites. More information on insecticidal soaps can be found here.
- Use properly applied, insecticide grade diatomaceous earth on window sills.
- Use double-sided carpet tape on window sills to intercept mites as they crawl inside.
- Seal all windows and cracks and crevices to prevent mite access.

For more info, check out:

Put links to pertinent fact sheets here.

Utah Pests News: Clover Mites:
<http://utahpests.usu.edu/html/utah-pests-news/spring/clover-mites-may-be-showing-up-in-homes-now/>

Colorado State University: Clover and other Mites: <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/insect/05505.html>

PennState University: Clover Mites <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/insect/05505.html>

