

Apricot

European Red Mite

Scientific name: *Panonychus ulmi*

(Reviewed 11/07, updated 2/09)



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DESCRIPTION OF THE PEST

European red mites overwinter as eggs located at the base of buds and spurs on smaller branches or in wounds. [Eggs](#) are red with a slender stipe arising from the center. Newly hatched mites are green, but with feeding turn red with a white spot at the base of each hair. These mites have 5 to 10 generations per year.

DAMAGE

European red mites cause leaf stippling. Prolonged feeding causes leaves to pale and appear bronzed and burned at the tips and margins. Leaf drop can occur at high infestation levels (in excess of 100 mites per leaf for extended periods). At low levels, this mite can be beneficial; it serves as an alternative food for predators.

MANAGEMENT

Predators will generally keep European red mite populations at low levels. Allowing low populations in the orchard during spring enables predator populations to increase to levels that are more effective in controlling web-spinning mites. Hot weather and predators cause European red mite populations to decline in summer.

Biological Control

Several predaceous species feed on European red mite, including lacewings ([Chrysoperla spp.](#), [Chrysopa](#) spp., and [Hemerobius sp.](#)), [damselfly bugs](#) (*Nabis* sp.), [lady beetles](#) *Stethorus picipes*, and [minute pirate bug](#) (*Orius tristicolor*). [Western predatory mites](#), *Galendromus* (= *Metaseiulus*) *occidentalis*, also feed on European red mite but are not as effective predators as they are on web-spinning mites because of their inability to break through the egg shell of the European red mite.

Organically Acceptable Methods

Certain oil sprays are acceptable for use on organically grown apricots.

Monitoring and Treatment Decisions

Monitor orchards once a week during the growing season when monitoring for other pests. No treatment thresholds have been established, but trees are able to tolerate greater numbers of European red mites than web-spinning mites per leaf. A dormant oil spray is the preferred treatment and is intended to control European red mite eggs.

