

# Clover Mite *Bryobia praetiosa* Koch<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

The clover mite, *Bryobia praetiosa* Koch, is one of the larger plant-feeding mites found in the landscape. It often becomes a pest indoors after heavy rain, excessive heat or a change in the season, which stimulate massive numbers to enter buildings. The mites appear as moving dark spots to the naked eye, crawling around walls, windows and doors. Crushing the mites to kill them leaves a large reddish spot. Fortunately, the mites do not reproduce indoors and will die within a few days from dehydration.

Although the mites typically invade homes during the spring, they may also appear during cooler periods of the year. Cool summers favor clover mite survival, while warm, dry summers cause inactivity or aestivation. Please note that these large population outbreaks of mites can be confused with similar outbreaks of the predatory mites *Balaustium* spp. that exhibit a lot of the same behavioral characteristics. They also resemble clover mites in body size and color. At least a 20x hand lens is required to determine the difference between clover mite and the *Balaustium* spp.

## Distribution

Clover mites are widely distributed in North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia.

## Description

**Adults:** The adults are reddish brown to a dark green-brown color. They are eight-legged, but it is their front pair of legs that makes them distinctive from other mites. The front legs are twice the size of the others and are extended forward near the head. For this reason, many times the front legs are mistaken for antennae. The body is oval-shaped, about 0.75 to 0.85 mm in length and has featherlike plates arranged on the abdomen.

**Eggs:** The eggs are bright red, spherical shaped, and about 0.12 mm in diameter.

**Immature Stages:** The larval form is distinctive because its dorsal body setae are longer, slender, and serrate. Larvae are also bright red, disc-shaped and six-legged. Clover mites go through two nymphal stages, protonymph and deutonymph, which are eight-legged like the adults.

## Life Cycle and Biology

Clover mites are parthenogenetic, which means that they develop from unfertilized eggs and their population is composed entirely of females. A generation lasts approximately one month. Adult clover mites live for about two weeks outdoors, as long as weather conditions are suitable for their development.

Females lay about 70 eggs each, singly or in masses, in dry protected areas with enough sun exposure for them to

1. This document is EENY 437, one of a series of the Entomology and Nematology Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date July 2008. Reviewed December 2011. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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