

False-Mastic Psylla, *Ceropsylla sideroxyli* Riley (Insecta: Hemiptera: Psyllidae)¹

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The Featured Creatures collection provides in-depth profiles of insects, nematodes, arachnids and other organisms relevant to Florida. These profiles are intended for the use of interested laypersons with some knowledge of biology as well as academic audiences.

Introduction



Figure 1. New adult false-mastic psylla, *Ceropsylla sideroxyli* Riley, emerging from a pupal case.

Credits: Lyle J. Buss, UF/IFAS

Leaves of the false-mastic tree (*Sideroxylon foetidissimum* Jacq.) commonly are attacked by a jumping plant louse,

Ceropsylla sideroxyli Riley. Damage is often severe, but since the host itself is not highly commercialized, little attention has been given to control methods.

Distribution

This psyllid was originally described from Lake Worth, Florida, in 1885 by C.V. Riley. Since then it has been reported from other localities in southern Florida, principally along the Atlantic seaboard from Cape Canaveral south to Key West as well as in Zacatula, Guerrero, and Esmerelda, Chiapas, Mexico. Most of the Florida localities are taken from records in the files of the Division of Plant Industry.

Description

Psyllid nymphs are found on the underside of a leaf, embedded in small, scattered, cup-shaped excavations, which on the upper side of the leaf appear as rough, elevated pustules. A white waxlike (not flocculent) excretion covers the dorsal surface of the nymphs and makes them very conspicuous.

Adult psyllids of this species are 4 mm long to tip of folded wings. Their general color is green to yellow. The front of head, between antennae, including genal (=cheek) processes, the anterior 2/3 of prescutum and two broad stripes on scutum (=back), are dark brown. The antennae are dark apically. The wings are hyaline (glassy or transparent).

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Microscopic characters of the head and wings are used to separate this psyllid from other species. No other closely related species is known from Florida. In fact, Arnett (2000) lists this species as the only member of its genus in America north of Mexico.



Figure 2. Nymphs of the false-mastic psylla, *Ceropsylla sideroxyli* Riley.
Credits: Lyle J. Buss, UF/IFAS



Figure 3. Nymph (left) and a pit (right), from which it was removed, of a false-mastic psylla, *Ceropsylla sideroxyli* Riley.
Credits: Lyle J. Buss, UF/IFAS



Figure 4. Adult false-mastic psylla, *Ceropsylla sideroxyli* Riley.
Credits: Lyle J. Buss, UF/IFAS

Host Plant

The host plant species, *Sideroxylon foetidissimum*, ranges from southern Florida, including the Florida Keys, north to the eastern coast to Cape Canaveral (Little 1953). It also is found in the West Indies (including Puerto Rico and the

Virgin Islands), and a variety is found in Yucatan peninsula of Mexico and Belize. The USDA Plant database lists Florida as the only state that has this species (USDA 2006).



Figure 5. Infestation of the false-mastic psylla, *Ceropsylla sideroxyli* Riley.

Credits: Lyle J. Buss, UF/IFAS



Figure 6. Range of *Sideroxylon foetidissimum* in Florida.

Little (1953) lists mastic and wild olive as other common names and gives *Sideroxylon mastichodendron* and *Mastichodendron foetidissimum* as synonyms. The specific epithet refers to the very ill-smelling, cheese-like odor of the numerous flowers.

This psyllid also attacks other *Sideroxylon* (Sapotaceae) species (Percy 2005).

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