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Changes to Compendia distribution data: the distribution tables, maps and references in datasheets have been restructured to handle the data better for updating and align with a geographic standard. Further details are available on the About page.

[PRA Tool](#) for plant commodity and pest-initiated Pest Risk Analysis. [Available as an addition to the CPC.](#)

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[Next: Identification of Nipaecoccus \(Hemiptera: Coccoomorpha... >>](#)

[Return to Search Results](#)

Datasheet

Nipaecoccus nipae (spiked mealybug)

Index

[Pictures](#)[Identity](#)[Taxonomic Tree](#)[Notes on Taxonomy and Nomenclature](#)[Description](#)[Distribution](#)[Distribution Table](#)[Risk of Introduction](#)[Hosts/Species Affected](#)[Host Plants and Other Plants Affected](#)[Growth Stages](#)[Symptoms](#)[List of Symptoms/Signs](#)[Biology and Ecology](#)[Notes on Natural Enemies](#)[Natural enemies](#)

Summary

Last modified

25 November 2019

Datasheet Type(s)

Pest

Natural Enemy

Preferred Scientific Name

Nipaecoccus nipae

Preferred Common Name

spiked mealybug

Taxonomic Tree

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Metazoa

Phylum: Arthropoda

Subphylum: Uniramia



[More information](#)

[Impact](#)

[Detection and Inspection](#)

[Similarities to Other Species/Conditions](#)

[Prevention and Control](#)

[References](#)

[Distribution Maps](#)

Class: Insecta

Host Plants and Other Plants Affected

[Annona](#)

[Annona muricata \(soursop\)](#)

[Annona reticulata \(bullock's heart\)](#)

[Annona squamosa \(sugar apple\)](#)

[Anthurium andreanum](#)



[More...](#)

[More information](#)


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Pictures

[Top of page](#)

Picture	Title	Caption	Copyright
	Adult	N. nipae on Kentia palm from the Canary Isles. Adult females 3.5 mm long, flattish and oval, with distinctive dorsal and marginal white or yellow wax cones which create a satellite appearance. Male N. nipae produce small (ca 2 mm long) waxy filamentous cocoons or tests on the foliage, often in large numbers.	Crown Copyright

Identity

[Top of page](#)

Preferred Scientific Name

Nipaeococcus nipae (Maskell, 1893)

Preferred Common Name

spiked mealybug

Other Scientific Names

Ceroputo nipae (Maskell), Lindinger, 1904

Dactylopius dubia Maxwell-Lefroy, 1903

Dactylopius nipae Maskell, 1893

Dactylopius pseudonipae Cockerell, 1897

Nipaeococcus pseudonipae (Cockerell), Beardsley, 1960

Pseudococcus magnoliae Hambleton, 1935

Pseudococcus nipae (Maskell), Cockerell, 1902

Pseudococcus pseudonipae (Cockerell), Fernald, 1903

Ripersia nipae (Maskell), Gómez-Menor Ortega

Ripersia serrata Tinsley, 1900

Trechocorys nipae (Maskell), Kirkaldy, 1904

International Common Names

English: avocado mealybug; buff coconut mealybug; coconut mealybug; nipa mealybug; sugarapple mealybug

Spanish: chinche harinosa del cocotero; piojo harinoso (Mexico)

French: cochenille du cocotier

Local Common Names

Netherlands: Palmwolluis

South Africa: palm wolluis

EPPO code

NIPANI (*Nipaeococcus nipae*)

Domain: Eukaryota
Kingdom: Metazoa
Phylum: Arthropoda
Subphylum: Uniramia
Class: Insecta
Order: Hemiptera
Suborder: Sternorrhyncha
Unknown: Coccoidea
Family: Pseudococcidae
Genus: *Nipaecoccus*
Species: *Nipaecoccus nipae*

Notes on Taxonomy and Nomenclature

[Top of page](#)

There are apparently two forms of *Nipaecoccus nipae*, one with white wax and the other with yellow wax, which have often been named *N. nipae* and *N. pseudonipae*, respectively (Zimmerman, 1948; Williams and Granara de Willink, 1992). [Beardsley \(1960\)](#) suggested morphological differences between the adult males of the two forms but no morphological characters have been found to distinguish the adult females. In life, the yellow and white forms are often found living together and for the purposes of this work they are regarded as the same species.

Description

[Top of page](#)

In life, adult female *N. nipae* are 3.5 mm long, flattish and oval. They are salmon-pink to dark-red in colour, with distinctive dorsal and marginal white or yellow wax cones which create a satellite appearance. In most species of mealybug, the males, if present, are less conspicuous than the females, but male *N. nipae* are more numerous than females. Male *N. nipae* produce small (about 2 mm long) waxy filamentous cocoons or tests on the foliage, which are often present in large numbers. The male tests of *N. nipae* are more common and more conspicuous than those of many other mealybug species.

Authoritative identification of *N. nipae* involves detailed microscopic examination of slide-mounted, teneral, adult females by a competent taxonomist. For detailed morphological descriptions of the adult female, illustrations and keys to the species of *Nipaecoccus* that occur in North America see [Ferris \(1950\)](#) and [McKenzie \(1967\)](#), for those in Central and South America see Williams and Granara de Willink (1992) and for those in Australia see [Williams \(1985\)](#). [Beardsley \(1960\)](#) has described the morphology of the adult male.

Distribution

[Top of page](#)

N. nipae is found in Europe, Asia, Africa, North, Central and South America and Oceania ([Ben-Dov, 1994](#); CABI/EPPO, 2005).

The collection at The Natural History Museum, London, UK contains numerous samples of *Nipaecoccus* from southern Asia, particularly India; all of them are *N. viridis* and not *N. nipae*. On the basis of the coverage by [Williams \(2004\)](#), and the absence of supporting specimens, the records of *N. nipae* from southern Asia are regarded as of questionable accuracy and are not included in the recent distribution map by CABI/EPPO (2005).

A tentative record for Australia ([Williams, 1985](#)), has not been included in CABI/EPPO (2005).

In northern and central Europe, including the UK, *N. nipae* is found in glasshouses, particularly in botanical gardens, and does not appear to occur in the open. It is therefore recorded as occasionally present in this region. In South Africa, *N. nipae* is mostly found in glasshouses, but is occasionally found in the open around Durban (CABI/EPPO, 2005).

Distribution Table

[Top of page](#)

The distribution in this summary table is based on all the information available. When several references are cited, they may give conflicting information on the status. Further details may be available for individual references in the Distribution Table Details section which can be selected by going to Generate Report.

Last updated: 10 Jan 2020

Continent/Country/Region	Distribution	Last Reported	Origin	First Reported	Invasive	Reference	Notes
Africa							
Algeria	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Madagascar	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Morocco	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
South Africa	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Zimbabwe	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Asia							
Bangladesh	Absent, Unconfirmed presence record(s)					APPPC (1987); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
China	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-Fujian	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-Guangxi	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-Hainan	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Georgia	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
India	Present					CABI (Undated a)	Present based on regional distribution.
-Bihar	Absent, Unconfirmed presence record(s)					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-Kerala	Present					Josephraj Kumar et al. (2012)	
-Tamil Nadu	Absent, Unconfirmed presence record(s)					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-West Bengal	Absent, Unconfirmed presence record(s)					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Indonesia	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-Java	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Pakistan	Absent, Unconfirmed presence record(s)					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Philippines	Present				Invasive	Caasi-Lit et al. (2012); Tokihiro (2006)	
South Korea	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Thailand	Absent, Unconfirmed presence record(s)					Waterhouse (1993); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Turkey	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Vietnam	Absent, Unconfirmed presence record(s)					Waterhouse (1993); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Europe							
Austria	Present, Few occurrences					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Belgium	Present, Few occurrences					CABI and EPPO (2005)	

Continent/Country/Region	Distribution	Last Reported	Origin	First Reported	Invasive	Reference	Notes
Czechoslovakia	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
France	Present, Few occurrences					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Hungary	Present, Few occurrences					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Italy	Present, Few occurrences					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Poland	Present, Few occurrences					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Portugal	Present, Few occurrences					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-Madeira	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Russia	Present, Few occurrences					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-Central Russia	Present, Few occurrences					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-Russia (Europe)	Present, Few occurrences					Ben-Dov (1994)	
Spain	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-Canary Islands	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
United Kingdom	Present, Few occurrences					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
North America							
Antigua and Barbuda	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Bahamas	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Barbados	Present					UK, CAB International (1966); Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Belize	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Bermuda	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
British Virgin Islands	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Cayman Islands	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Costa Rica	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Cuba	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Dominica	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Dominican Republic	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
El Salvador	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Grenada	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Guadeloupe	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Guatemala	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Jamaica	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	

Continent/Country/Region	Distribution	Last Reported	Origin	First Reported	Invasive	Reference	Notes
Mexico	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005); Arriola Padilla et al. (2016); Villatoro-Moreno et al. (2016)	
Nicaragua	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Panama	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Puerto Rico	Present					UK, CAB International (1966); Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Saint Lucia	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Trinidad and Tobago	Present, Widespread					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
U.S. Virgin Islands	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
United States	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-California	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-Florida	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-Hawaii	Present, Widespread					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-Louisiana	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Oceania							
Federated States of Micronesia	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Fiji	Present					CABI (Undated)	Original citation: Hodgson and agowska (2011)
Guam	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Samoa	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
South America							
Argentina	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Brazil	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-Parana	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-Rio de Janeiro	Present					CABI and EPPO (2005)	
-Sao Paulo	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Colombia	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Ecuador	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Guyana	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Peru	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Suriname	Present					UK, CAB International (1966); Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	
Venezuela	Present					Ben-Dov (1994); CABI and EPPO (2005)	

Risk of Introduction

[Top of page](#)

Immature and adult female *N. nipae* are readily carried on plants and plant produce and may be injurious when introduced to new geographical areas where they have no natural enemies. Injudicious chemical spraying techniques may reduce the natural enemies of *N. nipae* allowing them to proliferate.

Hosts/Species Affected

[Top of page](#)

N. nipae is polyphagous and attacks 80 genera of plants belonging to 43 families ([Ben-Dov, 1994](#)). It is recorded feeding on a wide range of economically important plants, mostly fruit crops and ornamentals, including avocados, bananas, citrus, cocoa, coconuts, custard apples (*Annona reticulata*), edible figs, guavas, mangoes, oil palm, orchids, pawpaws, pineapples, seaside grapes and soursop (*Annona muricata*). *N. nipae* seems to prefer palms, such as species of *Areca*, *Cocos*, *Kentia*, *Kentiopsis* and *Sabal*. In temperate regions in Europe and North America, *N. nipae* often attacks ornamental palms grown under glass.

Plant name	Family	Context
Annona	Annonaceae	Main
Annona muricata (soursop)	Annonaceae	Main
Annona reticulata (bullock's heart)	Annonaceae	Main
Annona squamosa (sugar apple)	Annonaceae	Main
Anthurium andreanum	Araceae	Main
Areca	Arecaceae	Main
Arecaceae (plants of the palm family)	Arecaceae	Main
Artocarpus altilis (breadfruit)	Moraceae	Main
Cajanus cajan (pigeon pea)	Fabaceae	Main
Carica papaya (pawpaw)	Caricaceae	Main
Citrus	Rutaceae	Main
Cocos nucifera (coconut)	Arecaceae	Main
Dracaena	Agavaceae	Main
Elaeis guineensis (African oil palm)	Arecaceae	Main
Ficus carica (common fig)	Moraceae	Main
Ficus elastica (rubber plant)	Moraceae	Main
Ipomoea batatas (sweet potato)	Convolvulaceae	Main
Mangifera indica (mango)	Anacardiaceae	Main
Manihot esculenta (cassava)	Euphorbiaceae	Main
Manilkara zapota (sapodilla)	Sapotaceae	Main
Morus (mulberrytree)	Moraceae	Main
Musa (banana)	Musaceae	Main
Nephelium lappaceum (rambutan)	Sapindaceae	Other
Olea (olive)	Oleaceae	Main
Orchidaceae (orchids)	Orchidaceae	Main
Persea americana (avocado)	Lauraceae	Main
Psidium guajava (guava)	Myrtaceae	Main
Sabal (palmetto-palm)	Arecaceae	Main
Solanum tuberosum (potato)	Solanaceae	Main
Strelitzia	Strelitziaceae	Main
Theobroma	Malvaceae	Main
Theobroma cacao (cocoa)	Malvaceae	Main
Tillandsia	Bromeliaceae	Main
Vitis (grape)	Vitaceae	Main
Zingiber (ginger)	Zingiberaceae	Main

Growth Stages

Flowering stage, Fruiting stage, Post-harvest, Vegetative growing stage

Symptoms

[Top of page](#)

In most cases, the main damage caused by *N. nipae* is the depletion of plant sap, yellowing of the foliage, reduced vigour of the host, and the deposition on the foliage and fruit of honeydew which serves as a medium for the growth of black sooty moulds. The covering of sooty moulds reduces the photosynthetic area.

List of Symptoms/Signs

[Top of page](#)

Sign	Life Stages	Type
Fruit / external feeding		
Fruit / honeydew or sooty mould		
Growing point / external feeding		
Leaves / abnormal colours		
Leaves / honeydew or sooty mould		
Leaves / honeydew or sooty mould		
Stems / external feeding		

Biology and Ecology

[Top of page](#)

N. nipae is sexually reproductive but its biology and ecology are poorly known.

Notes on Natural Enemies

[Top of page](#)

[Bartlett \(1978\)](#) has given an account of the introduced parasites and predators used to control *N. nipae* in Hawaii. The parasitoid *Pseudaphycus utilis* is one of the most important natural enemies of *N. nipae*. Within about a year of the introduction of *P. utilis* to Hawaii, *N. nipae* had almost disappeared from Oahu and was soon almost eradicated from the Hawaiian Islands ([Bartlett, 1978](#)).

Natural enemies

[Top of page](#)

Natural enemy	Type	Life stages	Specificity	References	Biological control in	Biological control on
Anagrus dactylopii	Parasite	Nymphs				
Cryptolaemus montrouzieri	Predator	Adults/Nymphs			Bermuda; Puerto Rico; St Kitts Nevis	Annona; Arecaceae; avocados; Cocos nucifera; Erythrina; guavas
Curinus caeruleus	Predator	Adults/Nymphs				
Curinus coeruleus	Predator	Adults/Nymphs			Hawaii	avocados
Hyperaspis jucunda	Predator	Adults/Nymphs			St Kitts Nevis	Annona; avocados; Cocos nucifera
Hyperaspis silvestri	Predator	Adults/Nymphs				
Hyperaspis silvestrii	Predator	Adults/Nymphs			Hawaii	avocados
Mallada basalis	Predator					
Pseudaphycus utilis	Parasite	Nymphs			Bermuda; Hawaii; Puerto Rico; St Kitts Nevis	Annona; Arecaceae; avocados; Cocos nucifera; Erythrina; guavas
Pseudiatata nebulosa	Predator	Adults/Nymphs			Hawaii	avocados
Scymnus binaevatus	Predator	Adults/Nymphs			Bermuda	Annona; Arecaceae; avocados; guavas
Zarhopalus clavatus	Parasite	Nymphs				

N. nipae is generally of little economic importance, but it has become a pest of avocados and guavas in Hawaii, Bermuda and Puerto Rico (see [Ben-Dov, 1994](#) for further references). Ant-attended infestations of *N. nipae* have been recorded causing damage to coconut plantations in Guyana, together with the coconut scale *Aspidiotus destructor* (Raj, 1977). *N. nipae* is also a pest of ornamental palms. The damage caused by *N. nipae* may result in ornamental plants, fruit, cut flowers and foliage losing their market value.

Detection and Inspection

[Top of page](#)

Heavy infestations of *N. nipae* are conspicuous because of the presence of distinct waxy adult females, numerous waxy male tests and sooty mould growing on the honeydew. They usually occur on the undersides of the foliage.

Similarities to Other Species/Conditions

[Top of page](#)

N. nipae should be distinguished from *N. aurilanatus*, a pest usually found on *Araucariaceae*, which has spread to many tropical and subtropical regions. *N. aurilanatus* is easily distinguished because it has numerous ventral multilocular pores on all abdominal segments, no dorsal cephalic cluster of conical setae above the base of each antenna, and is a pest of conifers.

N. nipae, in contrast, has fewer ventral multilocular pores and they are confined to the last four abdominal segments. It also has a distinct dorsal cephalic cluster of conical setae above the base of each antenna and is rarely, if ever, found on a coniferous host.

Prevention and Control

[Top of page](#)

Due to the variable regulations around (de)registration of pesticides, your national list of registered pesticides or relevant authority should be consulted to determine which products are legally allowed for use in your country when considering chemical control. Pesticides should always be used in a lawful manner, consistent with the product's label.

Chemical Control

In Hawaii, the efficacy of a series of methods were evaluated as post-harvest treatments to eliminate *N. nipae*, along with other mealybugs, scale insects and aphids, from tropical cut flowers and foliage before shipment. A series of insecticidal dips were tested and the most effective was found to be a combination dip for at least 5 minutes in an insecticidal soap composed of potassium salts of fatty acids with fluvalinate ([Hansen et al., 1992a](#)). Vapour heat treatment was found to kill mealybug adults and nymphs after 1 hour at 46.6°C; and nymphs were killed after 2 hours at 45.2°C ([Hansen et al., 1992b](#)). Hydrogen cyanide fumigation treatment was found to kill *N. nipae* nymphs on palms ([Hansen et al., 1991](#)).

Infestations of *N. nipae* were eliminated in coconut plantations by chemically controlling Azteca ants which maintained and protected the mealybug colonies (Raj, 1977).

Biological Control

[Bartlett \(1978\)](#) records successful biological control of *N. nipae* in Hawaii by *Pseudaphycus utilis*. In Puerto Rico some improvement was reported following the introduction of *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri*, but good control was later obtained with the establishment of *P. utilis* ([Bartlett, 1978](#)).

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	<input type="radio"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Not recorded
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