

BIONOMICS OF THE VINE MEALYBUG, *Planococcus ficus* SIGNORET (HOMOPTERA: PSEUDOCOCCIDAE), IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY (CA)

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The vine mealybug, *Planococcus ficus* Signoret (Homoptera: Pseudicoccidae), was identified as a new pest of California vineyards first in the Coachella valley in 1992, and later in the San Joaquin Valley in 1998. Vine mealybug seasonal age-structure, density, within-vine distribution, and parasitism levels were investigated in three vineyards in the Coachella Valley during 2001-2002. Mealybug density increased in spring and reached peak densities in late May-June (near harvest-time). Populations decreased thereafter and remained low during fall and winter with activity increasing again in March. General mealybug distribution on the vine changed throughout the season. Mealybugs were concentrated in the lower vine sections (roots and trunk) during late fall and winter, started to move onto the new canes in April and to the leaves and bunches as the season progressed. After harvest, mealybugs started to move down the vine into more protected canopy and trunk sections. The presence of two main parasites, *Anagyrus pseudococci* and *Leptomastidea abnormis*, was recorded, but parasitism levels were low (<20%).