

LOOK OUT FOR

Giant pine scale (*Marchalina hellenica*)



Pine tree infested with *Marchalina hellenica*

Photo courtesy: The West Crete Blog

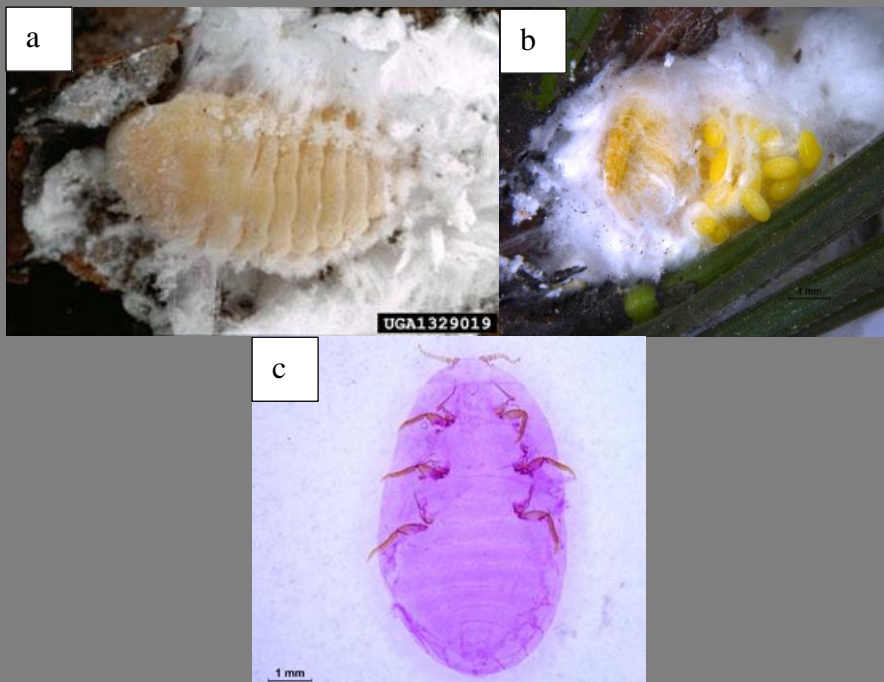
WHAT IS IT?

Giant pine scale is a scale insect that lives by sucking the sap of pine trees and some other trees. The insect is covered by white, waxy, cotton-like secretions. It produces large amounts of honeydew on which sooty moulds develop.

Recent samples collected in metropolitan Adelaide and Melbourne have confirmed its presence on Aleppo Pines (*Pinus halepensis*) and Monterey Pines, (*Pinus radiata*). These are the first records of *M. hellenica* in Australia, with *Pinus radiata* thought to be an extension of the host range. Overseas giant pine scale has also been recorded on other pines (*Pinus brutia*, *P. sylvestris*, *P. pinea*, *P. kochiana*, *P. laricio tauricus*, *P. nigra salzmannii* and *P. sosnowskyi*), on firs (*Abies cephalonica*, *A. nordmanniana*) and on spruce (*Picea engelmanni*, *P. orientalis*).

WHAT IS THE IMPACT?

Large populations of giant pine scale cause branch dieback and gradual desiccation, eventually followed by tree death. So far, pine death has been mainly observed in southern Greece and Crete, where large scale artificial inoculation of pine trees has resulted in the loss of the ecological balance between the insect and its natural predators. As a result trees in the surrounding pine forests have become overburdened by the insect. The pest has also caused defoliation of *Pinus* species in parts of Italy and Turkey, resulting in a significant impact in urban and forest environments, but no reported tree death.



Marchalina hellenica (a). on Italian Stone Pine (*Pinus pinea*) Photo courtesy: Andrea Battisti, Università di Padova, Bugwood.org (b and c) Adult and eggs on *Pinus radiata* (DEPI Victoria).

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Look for the white cotton-like wax produced by the scale insect (see photos). Giant pine scale prefers the lower part of the tree and mainly occurs on the trunk, but it may also be found on branches well up in the canopy, and even on exposed roots. Also look out for the black sooty mould which may grow on the large amounts of honeydew produced as the insect feeds on the plant sap.

HOW IS IT SPREAD?

Giant pine scale has a low mobility; females do not have wings and the winged males are rarely observed. Infestations within plantations and shelterbelts may be of higher risk as the insect can move from tree to tree easily.

**If you see anything unusual,
Call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline**

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1800 084 881**

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