

BIOSECURITY SA – Plant Health

Exotic Plant Pest Hotline: **1800 084 881** (available 24 hours)

Email: [PIRSA.planthealth@sa.gov.au](mailto:PIRSA.planthealth@sa.gov.au)

July 2017

BIOSECURITY SA  
PIRSA

## Parlatoria Date Scale

### *Parlatoria blanchardii*



The degree of infestation of this pest is markedly variable: it is sometimes thickest on 1-3 palms in any one group whereas others do not show any symptoms. Even in the infested palm only few fronds are affected. It is usually the oldest fronds which are the most affected

Image ID 33531 Photo/illustration by: Gassouma S. (2003-07-22).

#### What is Parlatoria Date Scale?

The Parlatoria date scale (*Parlatoria blanchardii*) is a serious pest due to the damage it inflicts on its host tree ([Phoenix dactylifera](#)).

Species may infest all parts of the date palm with heaviest infestations at the base of the leaves and crown. The primary feeding site on the host is the succulent white tissue at the base of the leafstalk.

Infestations often produce discoloration on the leaves and reduce the vigour of the tree.

#### Host plants / species affected

The Date palm, ([Phoenix dactylifera](#)), belongs to the [Areceaceae](#) family and is in the same genus as other ornamental palms such as the Canary Island palm ([Phoenix canariensis](#)) and the Sugar Date Palm ([Phoenix sylvestris](#)). Detections have also been recorded on the Doum Palm ([Hyphaene thebaica](#)) and the Desert Fan Palm ([Washingtonia filifera](#))

### Where has *Parlatoria* date scale been found?

The *Parlatoria* date scale, probably indigenous to Iraq, is widely distributed throughout most of the date-growing regions of the world including, Algeria, Argentina, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Tunisia.

This pest was introduced into the United States in 1890 with the first successful importation of date palm offshoots from Algeria and Egypt.

*Parlatoria* date scale has been in Central Australia since the mid 1950's

### What does *Parlatoria* date scale look like?

Under favourable conditions, *Parlatoria* date scale can spread over the surfaces of the foliage and fruit of the date palm, covering them with live and dead insects. The scale feeds on the white succulent tissues at the base of the leafstalk, one of the most protected and inaccessible places on the palm. As the population increases, the insects move from these areas on to the pinnae. Heavy infestations on the pinnae cause them to wither and die. In commercial plantings, date palms are seldom killed by *Parlatoria* date scale, but feeding by these insects definitely affects the vigour of the palms and decreases yields. Infestations on fruit reduce its commercial value and may render it unfit for human consumption.



The scale (about 1-1.5 × 0.5mm) is lifted to show the female that was underneath - female is apple-shaped, light purple in colour; male is wingless, with no compound eyes, but has a group of simple eyes on the top of the head.

Image ID 33533 Photo/illustration by: Gassouma S. (2003-07-22)

### What do I do if I think I've found *Parlatoria* date scale?

Early identification of this pest is vital for effective management and Biosecurity SA should be notified immediately of all plants suspected of being infected with *Parlatoria* date scale.

Call the Emergency Plant Pest Hotline on **1800 084 881** to report suspected cases of *Parlatoria* date scale.

Alternatively, you can take electronic photos of the suspect material and email to [PIRSA.planthealth@sa.gov.au](mailto:PIRSA.planthealth@sa.gov.au) together with a contact phone number.

To avoid spreading the disease:

- Do not touch, move or collect samples of the suspect plant material
- Do not go to another site with any host materials after handling suspect material.