



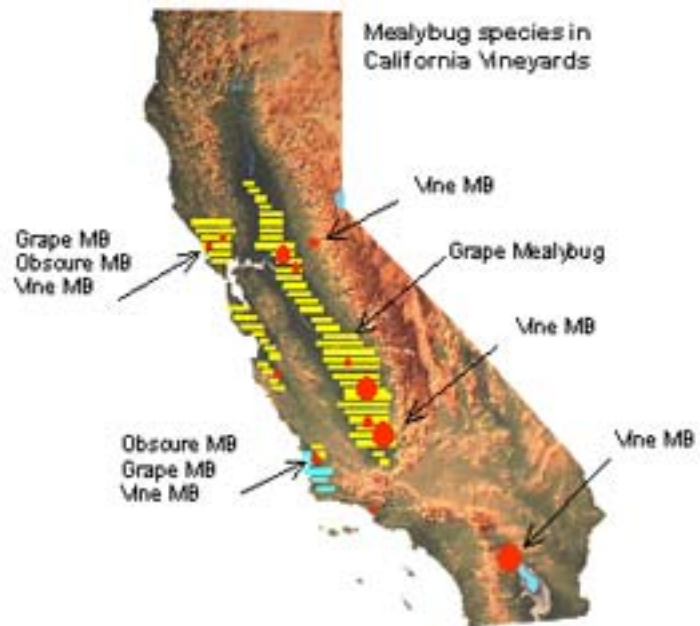
STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
1220 N Street, Room A-372  
Sacramento, CA 95814

## NURSERY ADVISORY

NO. 02-2003

DATE: January 10, 2003  
TO: All County Agricultural Commissioners  
FROM: Pest Exclusion/Nursery, Seed, and Cotton Program  
Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services  
SUBJECT: Update on Vine Mealybug (*Planococcus ficus*) on Grapevines in California

Vine mealybug (*Planococcus ficus*) was first detected in the Coachella Valley in the early 1990's. This serious pest of grapes was subsequently found for the first time in the San Joaquin Valley in 1994. This "B-rated" pest is often confused or mistaken for the grape mealybug (*Pseudococcus maritimus*). By July 2001, Vine mealybug (VMB) had been detected in Riverside, Kern, Fresno, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo counties. In the latter part of 2002, VMB had been detected in vineyards in Sacramento, Sonoma, Napa, Monterey and El Dorado counties. However, the pest is believed to be localized within these counties; county staff are taking steps to prevent further spread and eradicate it.



The biology and detection of VMB is complicated. All stages of the insect (eggs, crawlers, nymphs and adults) may feed on various parts of the plant, including leaves, berry clusters, canes, under the bark, as well as on roots.



The presence of VMB can escape detection during visual inspections when they are present in the cracks of the bark, under the bark, or below soil surface on the roots. The VMB can be artificially spread through movement of infested plant materials, vineyard equipment, infested leaves blown by wind, and on the clothing, shoes, hats, etc., of field workers who come in contact with infested vines. There is some evidence

that birds feeding on infested berry clusters can also spread VMB.

To limit the further spread of VMB into vineyards and prevent its movement through nursery stock or other plant materials, vehicles, equipment, etc., the following precautionary measures are suggested:

- Send samples of suspect mealybugs to CDFA, Plant Pest Diagnostics Center for proper diagnosis
- Do not take cuttings from vineyards known or suspected to have VMB
- Consult your county Agricultural Commissioner's office or UC Cooperative Extension staff to learn how to recognize the signs and symptoms of a VMB infestation
- Train the vineyard managers/employees on precautionary measures to prevent its spread through clothing, equipment, etc.



The following precautions are suggested for persons working in infested vineyards:

- Wearing disposable coveralls while working and destroying the coveralls before leaving the infested area and prior to entering a non-infested vineyard
- Removing any soil, debris or insects from shoes and other equipment
- Thoroughly cleaning all vehicles and equipment before moving from any infested area

If you have any questions concerning this advisory, please contact Donna Cunningham (ext. 3606) or Umesh Kodira (ext. 3615) at (916) 654-0435, or by e-mail at [ukodira@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:ukodira@cdfa.ca.gov) .

*(Vine mealybug photographs courtesy of Mark Battany and Kent Daane, UC Cooperative Extension)*