

Eriophyes chondrillae

Skeletonweed Gall Mite

Weed(s) Attacked: Rush Skeletonweed

SCNWCB February 2006

GENEALOGY

Original source for U.S. release was Italy. First U.S. releases made in 1977. Established in the Pacific Northwest, including Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Established in Stevens County.

LIFE CYCLE

Eggs are microscopic (0.04mm). Adults usually cannot be seen with the naked eye. Each of the tiny females may deposit 60-100 eggs within the gall they share. After hatching hundreds of the minute worm like nymphs feed on the green gall material around them. The nymphs pass through several developmental stages to become adults. Whenever the gall dries out there is a mass exodus of all mobile stages.

In the Pacific Northwest the female mites form a dark brown overwintering stage called a deutogyne. The deutogynes move down the stem in fall to crevices in the plant at or below the soil surface where they become quiescent until spring.

When the weed starts to bolt in the spring the mites invade the shoot buds. Adults live up to 4 weeks. The mites feed and continue to reproduce on a roughly 10 day cycle until fall.

EFFECT

Mite feeding causes the buds to contort into galls which look like miniature cauliflower. Both nymphal and adult stages damage the plant. Mite feeding decreases plant vigor, helps reduce or eliminate seed production, hinders formation of rosettes, reduces shoot production, and sometimes results in the death of the plant.

REDISTRIBUTION

Collect infected plants from July to mid October. Bind the galled plants together into "Teepees". Wedge these bundles into plants that are not infected. Cooler weather, evening releases, and high humidity helps the chances for establishment.

COMMENTS

This mite disperses well within the weed patch, and is known to colonize any biotype of Rush Skeletonweed found in our area. It is considered the most effective agent released on Rush Skeletonweed to date in our area. The agent is well established in Stevens County.

