



Recommendation for interceptions and findings of lantana mealybug *Phenacoccus parvus* Morrison (Hemiptera: Pseudococcidae), an invasive neotropical pest of vegetable and fruit crops, and ornamental plants

April 2013

This is the result of a brief assessment of readily available literature which indicates that statutory action against this organism is unlikely to be appropriate.

Species / Taxonomic group	<i>Phenacoccus parvus</i> Morrison (Hemiptera: Pseudococcidae), lantana mealybug
Reason for assessment	<i>P. parvus</i> has been intercepted twice on aquatic plants from Sri Lanka, in May 2011 on <i>Hygrophila</i> at Manchester airport and in February 2013 on <i>Hemigraphis</i> at Heathrow airport. No statutory action has been taken as a result of these finds. There have been no other reported interceptions of this pest in Europe.
Pest distribution	<i>P. parvus</i> is native to south and central America. It has now spread to warmer countries and regions of North America, Asia, Africa and Australasia.
Hosts	<i>P. parvus</i> has been recorded feeding on more than 70 plant species in 28 plant families. However, it exhibits a strong preference for <i>Lantana</i> sp., (Verbenaceae). Extensive experimental work on host preferences has shown that many recorded hosts were incapable of sustaining populations of the mealybug for more than a couple of generations, unless an infested lantana was nearby to keep re-populating them. Some of the edible hosts of relevance to the UK are garlic, celery, beet, peppers, cucumber, carrot, tomato, aubergine and potato. It has also feeds on chrysanthemum and poinsettia.
Pest status	<i>P. parvus</i> has been recorded stunting growth and preventing flower development in China aster, <i>Callistephus chinensis</i> in south India, however, worldwide, there have been very few reports of economic damage. Although, <i>P. parvus</i> has been shown to be damaging to tomato and aubergine in laboratory studies, no damage has been reported to crops.
Potential distribution and impact	The distribution of the pest suggests that it would only be able to survive indoors in the UK and the potential for the pest to spread is likely to be limited, although the impacts could be more significant in southern Europe. It has only recently spread widely in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and to the eastern Mediterranean, and may have a greater negative impact in the future, as it becomes more abundant.
No statutory action is recommended because:	
The distribution of <i>P. parvus</i> suggests that it is unlikely to be able to establish outdoors in the UK.	
Mealybugs are not highly mobile, therefore the potential for spread is low.	
There have been very few reports of <i>P. parvus</i> causing economic damage.	