



Maple velvet erineum gall mite

Aceria aceris

Order Acari, Family Eriophyidae; leaf vagrant, gall, erineum, rust, or eriophyid mites

Native pest

Host plants: Maples; similar galls, caused by other eriophyid mites, appear on many other woody species, especially beech.

Description: Adult eriophyid mites are too small to detect with a hand lens, so use a dissecting microscope. They range in length from 0.05–0.2 mm, are spindle-shaped, elongate and white with four anterior legs.

Life history: Overwintered adult females move to expanding leaf buds. From the lower leaf surface these females begin feeding and in the process they stimulate the leaf cells to form felt patches or erineum, in which they reproduce.

Overwintering: Adults under bark scales.

Damage symptoms: Maple velvet galls are circular or oval patches of dense hair-like mats or erineum. They are bright red, crimson, or green. They appear on both upper and lower leaf surfaces.

Monitoring: Look for the conspicuous red velvety patches in spring and summer.

Chemical control: Most galls cause only aesthetic injury and do not kill their hosts. Control is very difficult to achieve, and pesticide use must be timed to when the adults is initiating the gall. Adult mites are most susceptible to dormant applications of oil when they become active in spring prior to bud break. Control is only marginally effective, and some broad spectrum insecticides have actually worsened the problem. Since this gall maker spends the winter as an adult on the tree, keeping old galls around will not contribute to future gall problems and may conserve natural enemies.

Biological control: No reports of natural enemies

Plant mortality risk: Low

Biorational pesticides: None

Conventional pesticides: carbaryl



Red velvety patches on the underside of leaves caused by the maple velvet erineum gall eriophyid mite. (168)
Photo: John Davidson