

SIGNIFICANT PEST – REPORT IT – CALL 1800 084 881

GIANT PINE SCALE

Marchalina hellenica

Description

Giant Pine scale (GPS; *Marchalina Hellenica*) originates from the eastern Mediterranean but has been found in metropolitan Melbourne and Adelaide. It threatens Australia's urban conifer trees and the softwood timber industry.

GPS adults are relatively large scale pill-shaped insects 8–19 mm long and 3–5 mm wide, yellow to orange in colour with tiny legs. GPS feeds on the sap of conifer trees mostly on the lower trunk but will also feed on branches or, in some cases, above ground roots.

GPS females can reproduce without the males and are flightless. Winged males are rarely observed. Each female can produce over 300 eggs between November and January. GPS can spread naturally to infest other trees by crawling on the ground up to a maximum of 30-50 m per year. It can also spread by being accidentally carried by people, animals (e.g. birds, kangaroos) and on vehicles, machinery, firewood or wood waste.

Affected tree species

Trees in the family Pinaceae are susceptible, include species of Fir (*Abies* spp.), Spruce (*Picea* spp.), and Pine (*Pinus* spp.). The important plantation species *P. radiata* is susceptible.

Symptoms

All ages of tree are susceptible.

The maturing scale secretes a distinctive white, cotton-like, wax covering for protection from predators and the weather. This stands out against the cracks and surface of the dark trunks and branches of conifers. Often observed in the lower part of the tree trunk but may also be found on branches well up in the canopy, or occasionally on exposed roots.

In heavily infested trees, there is gradual desiccation, causing browning of needles and the crown, crown



Credit David Smith



Credit: David Smith

thinning, branch dieback and in combination with other pests or drought can eventually kill the tree.

Suspected cases must be reported.

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Time most likely to be seen

Early infestations will be most prevalent during spring and summer. Heavy infestations can be observed throughout the year as the old scale covering remains on the tree even when the insect has died.

Can be confused with

Can be confused with Pine Woolly Aphid (*Pineus pini*).



Prevention and control

- Source conifer seedlings (e.g. Christmas trees), firewood, or woodchips from reputable providers.
- Do not transport conifer seedlings, firewood, or woodchips from Melbourne or Adelaide to rural areas.
- Clean clothes gear, vehicles and machinery before entering pine plantations or recreational areas.
- Identify pines and other conifer trees in your area and check for presence of Giant Pine Scale.
- If suspected, take a photo and REPORT IT.
- To prevent further spread, limit access to suspected infested tree(s).

Further information

- Agriculture Victoria – <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/pest-insects-and-mites/priority-pest-insects-and-mites/giant-pine-scale>.
- Primary Industries and Regions South Australia – https://pir.sa.gov.au/crops-and-plants/weeds-and-plant-pests/plant-pests/pests-and-diseases-of-significant-concern/giant_pine_scale.
- Global Biodiversity Information Facility – <https://www.gbif.org/taxon/3Y2W2>.
- European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization Global Database – <https://gd.eppo.int/taxon/MARCHE>.

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