

The Avocado Mite of California, a New Species

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A species of spinning mite has been known to attack avocados in southern California for over a decade. A related species has attacked avocados and other trees in Florida for over thirty years. Since these two mites of avocado resemble one another superficially, entomologists and others have been identifying the California species as *Paratetranychus yothersi*, the name assigned to the Florida mite by the writer in 1914.¹

At the time when *Paratetranychus yothersi* was described, the male genital structure had not been studied and was unknown. Rather recently male specimens were obtained from Florida and studied critically, together with males of the California form. This examination of the male characters revealed that the California avocado mite is a distinct and undescribed species, and its description follows:

Paratetranychus coiti, new species.

Lengthy technical entomological descriptions with drawings are omitted here. (Editor.)

This mite was first brought to the writer's attention in 1929, by J. Eliot Coit and P. E. Oliver, both of them engaged in agricultural consulting service. Dr. Coit stated that the avocado mite "started around Carlsbad and spread rapidly from there . . . Several hundred acres were showing defoliation." In the last few years the writer has received this mite from seven localities in San Diego County, one locality in Orange County, and one locality in Los Angeles County, the collectors having been J. E. Coit, P. E. Oliver, H. M. Armitage, H. J. Quayle, Dean Palmer, and J. R. Lafollette. It has been commonly reported that the avocado mite is readily controlled by applications of sulfur dust.

At a constant temperature of 77° F., under laboratory conditions, the avocado mite requires 7 days to complete a full generation (egg to egg). At a constant temperature of 91.4° F., individuals of the avocado mite were not able to develop, and mites in all stages, including eggs, died.

1. From the Proceedings of the Entomological Society of Washington, Vol. 43, No. 4. April, 1941.