EFFECT OF ALTERNATIVE PREY ON THE CONTROL OF *Oligonychus perseae* (Tuttle, Baker & Abbatiello)

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Under the coastal climate conditions of South East Spain, dynamics of the persea mite, *Oligonychus persea*, is characterized by having a maximum of population density during the second half of August. However, the population dynamics of the main natural enemy of this pest, the phitoseiid mite *Euseius stipulatus*, has two population peaks, the first occurring before the appearance of the pest in the crop. This led us to hypothesize that the first peak of the population was caused by the presence of another prey: pollen deposited on the surface of the leaves.

This work aims at studying the effect of the presence of pollen on avocado leaves on the populations of the predatory mite and, consequently, on those of the persea mite. Also, it aims at designing a method to supply pollen to the crops, so that the presence of the predator after the first peak of its population is prolonged, and high densities of the predator are reached when the populations of the persea mite start to increase. For that, we evaluated several types of pollen as alternative prey for the phytoseiid *Euseius stipulatus*, one of them being maize pollen, and we carried out a field experiment where maize plants were planted inside an adult Hass orchard. Populations of the persea mite were lower in the plot with maize than in the control plot.