

Research Note

THE COCONUT PALM ERIOPHYID MITE, *ERIOPHYES GUERRERONIS* (KEIFER) IN PUERTO RICO (ACARINA: ERIOPHYIDAE)¹

Eriophyes guerreronis (Keifer), the coconut palm eriophyid mite, was found for the first time on the northern coast of Puerto Rico at Loiza, attacking fruits in a plantation by the seashore. Fruits attacked by this mite were brought to our laboratory by Dr. Julio Bird January 19, 1977. Since then, many fruits attacked by this mite have been observed by the authors in different parts of the Island; the mite has been collected by E. Abreu at the Isabela and Fortuna Substations, and at Mayagüez, Cabo Rojo, Arecibo and Rio Piedras.

This mite was described by Keifer² as *Aceria guerreronis* from specimens collected in coconut flowers and developing fruits in March 1962 at Guerrero, Mexico. Since then, it has been collected in Brazil, Colombia,



FIG. 1.—Fruit injury caused by the coconut eriophyid mite, *Eriophyes guerreronis* (Keifer).

¹ Manuscript submitted to Editorial Board September 4, 1985.

² Keifer, H. H., 1965. Eriphyid studies B. 14 Calif. Dep. Agric. Bur. Entomol., pp. 20.

Venezuela, West Africa and in Puerto Rico. Keifer et al.³ briefly described this species and illustrated it and its damage to coconuts.

This eriophyid mite attacks fruits in different stages of development and causes damage that develops into necrotic lesions (fig. 1). As the fruit grows, the injured areas enlarge longitudinally, taking the characteristic appearance shown in figure 1. Heavily attacked green fruits drop off and older fruits never develop fully. Generally they are smaller, deformed and with half or almost all the surface hardened and dry. Undoubtedly, the weight and quantity of pulp is reduced in attacked fruits.

Since this mite was found and described in Mexico, most of the literature regarding infestation, damage, dispersion, natural enemies and chemical control of this species has appeared in *Folia Entomologica Mexicana* of 1967, 1973-4, 1975-76, 1978, 1980 & 1982.

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³ Keifer, H. H., E. W. Baker, T. Kono, M. Delfinado and W. E. Styer, 1982. An illustrated guide to plant abnormalities caused by eriophyid mites in North America, USDA, ARS, Agric. Handbook 573: 1-178.