



## PESTS & DISEASES

# Mealy Bug

Mealy bugs have pale pink fleshy bodies that are coated in a white waxy outer coating, they have a fine fringe around them and a two-pronged tail. Mealy bugs are sap sucking insects, belonging to the order Hemiptera.

Mature adults can reach up to 5 mm long. They form dense clusters where the leaves join to the stem, along the undersides of leaves, around flower buds and when infestations get bad, they attack the roots. Mealy bugs thrive in warm moist conditions, house plants are particularly prone to attack. They form egg sacks surrounded by a white waxy coating that can contain hundreds of eggs. Sometimes mistaken for powdery mildew or woolly aphid, if untreated mealy bug is a serious problem that can lead to plant death.

Mealy bug distorts the new growth, can eventually form a white fluffy cottony coating over the plant, and in high enough numbers can cause the plant to droop.

### Control Methods

Mealy bug is very difficult to control so it is recommended to use an integrated pest management approach. This means use a variety of treatments to control populations.

- Coating a cotton bud with methylated sprits and dabbing onto single individuals can be effective
- For larger infestations use a systemic insecticide along with a horticultural oil spray. It is beneficial to do a follow up spray every two weeks.