



VARMET GUARD®

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES INC.



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Common Name: **Clover Mite**
Scientific Name: **Bryobia praetiosa**

CLOVER MITE



Introduction. The common name comes from clover being one of the preferred host plants of this mite. This is a nuisance pest, which sometimes invades structures by the thousands, primarily in the spring and autumn. It is distributed worldwide and is found throughout the United States.

Recognition. Adult clover mites are 1/64 inch long and have a soft, oval body that is colored dark red, olive green or rusty brown. Except for hatchlings (larvae, which have 3 pairs of legs) clover mites have 4 pairs of legs with the first pair very long, about twice the length of the 2nd pair, held forward like antennae. Clover mites are exclusively plant feeders. Immature stages are bright red in color.

Similar Mites. (1) The winter grain mite (*Penthaleus major*) is green and orange and has the 1st and 4th pair of legs longer than the 2nd and 3rd pairs. (2) The northern fowl mite (*Ornithonyssus sylvarium*) is red and has all the legs of approximately equal length. They are associated with nuisance birds nesting in and on buildings and homes.

Biology. Clover mites reproduce parthenogenetically (without fertilization); males are unknown in the United States. A female will lay about 70 spherical red eggs, typically throughout the summer and autumn. Eggs become dormant above 75°F and also inactive below 40°F. Eggs laid in the autumn hatch the following spring and those deposited in spring (typically April in Ohio) usually hatch within several days. Developmental stages include egg, larva, protonymph, deutonymph, and adult. Larvae have only 3 pairs of legs; whereas, nymphs and adults have 4 pairs. One generation or life cycle (egg to egg) typically requires about 1 month, with optimal



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developmental temperature being 65-69°F. Several generations can be completed during the autumn, winter, and spring.

Habits. Clover mites are plant feeders only. They feed on about 200 different plant species including trees, shrubs, flowers, grass, and agricultural/garden crops. White clover and black medic are the preferred host plants with Kentucky bluegrass, bent grass, red fescue, redtop, and chickweed a close second. Ornamentals and flowering plants are less preferred. Around structures they show a preference for heavily fertilized grass/lawns.

The spherical red eggs can sometimes be seen on foundation walls and/or in foundation cracks. They are also laid on vegetation. Sometimes in the spring or autumn the number of eggs can be large enough to give the surface they are on a fuzzy red appearance.

The invasion of structures by enormous numbers of clover mites usually occurs in the first warm, sunny days of spring, following a rain shower, and again in the autumn as the vegetation dies, at which times they may number in the hundreds of thousands. Invasion is typically through cracks around windows and doors or through masonry cracks. They will come up behind siding until an entry point is found.

Clover mites are active during times of cooler weather and become dormant during hot weather. In Ohio they become dormant in mid to late May and remain so until September. Sometimes these mites can be found in infested homes from October until December; however, nuisance activity is highest during the spring.

These mites will leave a reddish stain if crushed. This can cause problems on wallpaper, drapes, window shades, upholstered furniture and carpets.

Cultural Control & Preventative Measures. An 18-inch grass-free band around the structure's perimeter can reduce the number of invaders by about 90%. This vegetation-free band, combined with the application of an appropriately labeled pesticide as a perimeter treatment (applied by Varmant Guard), is the most effective measure.

Inside, clover mites should only be removed using a vacuum cleaner with a hose attachment, which will reduce or avoid red smears and stains.



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Professional Control. A Varmint Guard pest management professional will apply a generous volume of residual insecticide spray as a band extending upward about 2 feet on the foundation wall or to the bottom of any siding and come out about 6-10 feet from the foundation. The timing of the application is crucial and must occur in late March or early April.

Inside, clover mites should only be removed using a vacuum cleaner with a hose attachment, which will reduce or avoid red smears and stains. Indoor crack and crevice applications of pesticides will only give temporary relief if outdoor control measures are not done.