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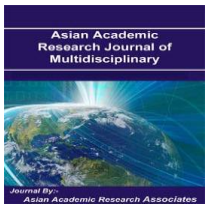

MACONELLICOCCUS HIRSUTUS (GREEN, 1908) (HEMIPTERA: PSEUDOCOCCIDAE): EXOTIC PEST INTRODUCED ON VINE IN THE SÃO FRANCISCO VALLEY

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Abstract

The pink hibiscus mealybug, *Maconellicoccus hirsutus* is a polyphagous pest that attacks more than 200 generous and about more than 74 botanical families of cultivated or uncultivated plants. Many of these plants are of economic importance to Brazil, including cotton, cocoa, coffee, coconut, citrus, cucumber, corn, beans, papaya, sweet potatoes, figs, grapes, guavas, peanuts, roses, hibiscus and ornamental palms. However, *M. hirsutus* was recently introduced in Brazil. This study reported the first time occurence this pest in São Francisco Valley, Northeastern Brazil. After the pest presence alert, samplings were taken inside and around of the plantation of vines. The mealybugs were found attacking all structures of grape plants (*Vitis vinifera*), native plants of caatinga, weeds, "windbreaks" and fruit trees. In grape plants, the mealybugs inside bunches caused the reduction of the fruits quality and the discard of them, and on the sprouts they cause the inhibition of branches development, compromising at least two harvests. Thus, by severity of the damage, *M. hirsutus* may be considered one of the most important pests of the grape culture in the region. The control of this new pest is a big challenge that will require a set of actions including chemical insecticides registration, the development of an effective monitoring plan as well as the search and use of natural enemies adapted to the region.

Keywords: Pink hibiscus mealybug, Vine pest, *Vitis vinifera*, Semiarid.

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