

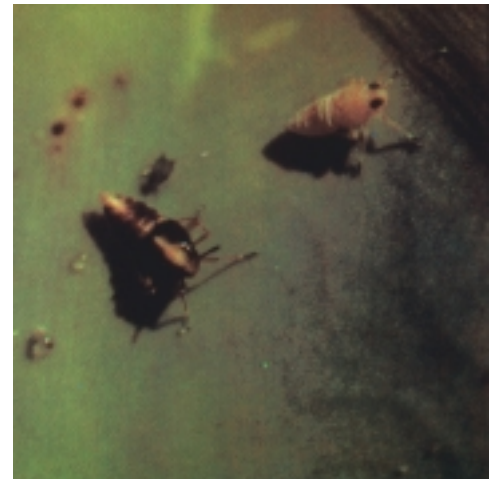
Taro Planthopper (*Tarophagus proserpina* [Kirkaldy])

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The eggs of the Taro Planthopper, (*Tarophagus proserpina* [Kirkaldy]) (Hemiptera: Delphacidae) are laid in twos in small holes made by the female in the midrib, petioles, or petiole bases of taro plants. The eggs hatch after 14 days into creamy white nymphs. There are five nymphal stages lasting about 19 days depending on weather conditions. The nymphs then become adults, which are black with a



Taro leaf severely damaged by taro leaf planthopper



Taro planthopper nymphs

big white patch. For most of the year, planthopper adults are short-winged and cannot fly, but long-winged forms are often present during cooler periods or if the plants are beginning to mature and die. Nymphs and adults tend to congregate on the underside of leaves and on the unfurled central leaf. Planthoppers normally move sideways, and both adults and nymphs hop readily if disturbed. They are most common during dry weather.

Taro planthoppers feed only on taro. They suck the sap out of the plant and a reddish crust forms where the sap has oozed out. Heavy feeding can cause the leaves to turn yellow, wither and die. These planthoppers may also transmit several taro diseases. The two most serious, alomae and bobone, are reported only from the Solomon Islands and New Guinea.

The taro planthopper occurs from SE Asia throughout most of the Pacific Islands, including American Samoa, Hawaii and most of the larger islands of Micronesia.

Control


Planting clean taro stock in new fields will prevent spread of planthoppers. A predatory bug, *Cyrtorrhinus fulvus*, feeds on the eggs of the taro planthopper and has been introduced to most islands where the

planthopper occurs. *C. fulvus* usually keeps planthopper populations under control, but insecticides used against other taro pests may cause outbreaks of this planthopper by destroying natural enemy populations.

If chemical control is required or if additional information is desired, consult an Extension Agent at your local land grant institution. On Guam, you may also consult the Guam Fruit and Vegetable Pesticide Guide for current recommendations and permissible uses.

*Replaces Agricultural Pests of the Pacific Series, ADAP 90-3.

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