

# PEST ALERT

FDACS-P-01916

Pest Alert created-November-2018

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## Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Plant Industry

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### First Report of the Pilea Aphid (*Myzus fataunae* Shinji) in the Western Hemisphere

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**INTRODUCTION:** On August 22, 2018, from Longwood, Seminole County, Florida, Jesse Krok (DPI) collected a sample of aluminum plant (*Pilea cadeirei* Gagnep. & Guill.) infested with all life stages of the aphid *Myzus fataunae* Shinji 1924 (after Takahashi 1965). *Myzus fataunae* is native to Japan and Korea; this represents the first record of the species in the Western Hemisphere.

**HOSTS:** The species was described originally from *Fatoua* (Moraceae) (Shinji 1924), though subsequent collections have been from members of the Urticaceae: aluminum plant, *Pilea cadierei* Gagnep. & Guill.; Canadian or Japanese clearweed, *Pilea pumila* (*hamaoi*) (L.) A. Gray; and other ornamental *Pilea*, *Boehmeria* and *Parietaria* species (Takahashi 1965, Miyazaki 1971, Blackman & Eastop 2018).

**SURVEY:** A hand lens is necessary to survey for *M. fataunae*. Other aphids may be present on the host and potential host plants, but the target will stand out by its small size and distinct bicoloration. *Myzus fataunae* appears to feed on all above-ground parts of the plant, but favors new growth and petioles. Cut potentially infested plant parts and place them in a vial of alcohol. Alternatively, separate foliage from roots (to prevent soil particles from obscuring aphids) and beat it against the side of a shallow white tray; then, tap the plant material over the tray using a pencil. Inspect dislodged debris on the tray using a hand lens and, with a brush, transfer the aphids into alcohol.

**FIELD SCREENING:** *Myzus fataunae* is a minute aphid (0.9-1.0 mm). The adult, wingless forms are two-toned, with a brown head and thorax and yellow abdomen. Young immatures are entirely greenish white, while older instars develop the bicoloration. Most diagnostic characters cannot be seen without high-powered optics. When surveying on the plant, look for small, bi-colored specks (Fig. 1-3).

#### REFERENCES:

Blackman, R. L., and V. F. Eastop. 2018. Aphids on the World's Plants. Available at <http://www.aphidsonworldsplants.info/index.htm> (Last accessed September 2018).

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Shinji, O. 1924. New Aphids from Morioka. Dobutsugaku Zasshi 36 (431): 343-372.

Takahashi, R. 1965. *Myzus* of Japan (Aphididae). Mushi 38 (9): 43-78.





**Figure 1.** Pilea aphids on a stem (greatly magnified).  
Photograph by Jeff Lotz, DPI.



**Figure 2.** Pilea aphids on *Pilea cadierei*.  
Photograph by Jeff Lotz, DPI



**Figure 3.** Pilea aphids on aluminum plant. Two aphids are circled in red.  
Leaf length is approximately 1 inch.  
Photograph by Jeff Lotz, DPI.