

What is *Coccus limonii* Murray, 1871 (Hem. Coccoidea, Diaspididae) ?

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Douglas J. WILLIAMS & Yair BEN-DOV. — What is *Coccus limonii* Murray, 1871 (Hem. Coccoidea, Diaspididae)?

Two species of armoured scale insects in the family Diaspididae have been given the specific epithet “*limonii*”. The earliest is *Aspidiotus limonii* Signoret described by SIGNORET (1869) but this name was synonymised later with *Aspidiotus nerii* Bouché by FERNALD (1903). The other species, *Coccus limonii* Murray, described by MURRAY (1871), has been overlooked in major works including those of SIGNORET (1877), FERNALD (1903), FERRIS (1941), BORCHSENIUS (1966) and BEN-DOV & GERMAN (2003). LINDINGER (1935), however, noticed the name and listed it as a synonym of *Aspidiotus hederae* Vallot (= *A. nerii* Bouché).

In a report at a meeting of the Scientific Committee of the Royal Horticultural Society, London, held on January 18, 1871, SMEE (1871) submitted lemons imported from Sicily attacked by a species of *Coccus* and stated that portions of the lemons remained green and did not ripen. He added that the species of *Coccus* resembled the species which had attacked Oleander and had attained serious proportions only that year in Sicily. Even then, Smee must have linked the species with the Oleander Scale, *Aspidiotus nerii*. Specimens of the scale insect were sent to Andrew Murray who described the species as *Coccus limonii*.

Andrew Murray (1812-1887) was a native of Scotland and during his life time he was a keen naturalist. He was especially active in the Royal Horticultural Society of London (ANONYMOUS, 1878) and it was during his membership of the Scientific Committee that he described *Coccus limonii*.

The original description and illustrations are remarkably detailed for the time. He described the species as “*The Coccus scale is a round flat white disk, a little darker or brownish in the middle. On raising the scale the insect is seen below, apparently in no way connected to it*”. Murray described the insect and illustrated it upside down [Fig. 71]. He even illustrated the fringed plates of the pygidium [Fig. 72], which, unfortunately, he thought were the mouthparts. *Coccus limonii* Murray

is undoubtedly the same species as *Aspidiotus nerii* and we agree with the earlier synonymy by LINDINGER (1935) adding yet another name to the list of synonyms of that species.

Despite the early attacks observed by SMEE (1871), *A. nerii* has continued to be injurious to lemons in Sicily as indicated by BODENHEIMER (1951), LIOTTA & MANIGLIA (1974), LIOTTA *et al.* (1985) and LONGO *et al.* (1995).

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