

Household and Structural

Department of Entomology

CLOVER MITES IN THE HOME

Timothy J. Gibb, Extension Entomologist

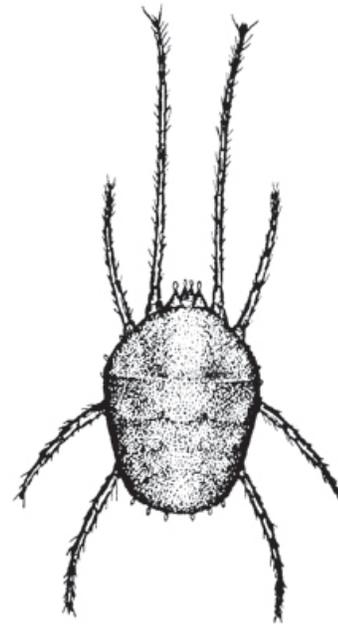
Clover mites can become an annoying household pest, especially in and around homes where new lawns are being established or where there's a heavy growth of well-fertilized grass close to foundation walls.

The mites are very tiny creatures (smaller than a pin head) and may occur in countless numbers. Clover mites are often reddish in color and can be distinguished from other mites due to their unusually long front legs. These are twice as long as the other legs.

They usually appear first around windows, but later may occur throughout home. Clover mites do not bite people or cause structural damage indoors, but are extremely annoying and may leave a red stain when crushed.

Clover mites feed on grasses, clovers and certain other plants in the lawn and around the home. They often crawl into cracks and crevices to molt and lay eggs. Typical "hiding places" are under the loose bark of trees, on foundations, walls, beneath siding and around window frames.

Clover mites are most abundant in the fall and spring and are relatively inactive during the hot summer months and again during cold weather. They migrate into homes either when populations become high or when feeding conditions become unfavorable, such as the onset of hot or cold weather.



Line drawing of a clover mite



Clover mite (Photo credit: John Obermeyer)

CONTROL MEASURES

The following are preventive and control measures that have proven to be effective.

Prevention:

- Keeping clover mites from ever entering, is the most sustainable control practice for a home. Grass should not be planted right up to the foundation of the home. Lay a barrier of pea gravel 18-24 inches wide along the foundation walls. If pea gravel is not practical, leave bare soil or use flower beds as the barrier but do not allow any vegetation to touch foundation walls and create bridges for mites into the home.

- Spray both barrier strip and foundation walls with a miticide when mites are first noticed. Where possible, also treat the inside of the foundation walls, including the plates and areas above them. If there is no barrier strip, treat foundation walls and the grass itself for a distance of 10-20 feet outward from the walls.
- Effective and safe miticides for use as barrier sprays include pyrethrins, synthetic pyrethroids and sometimes insecticidal soaps.
- obvious entrance points as well as walls and windows indoors where mites congregate.
- Wiping and vacuuming also may provide short term relief but remember that clover mites are soft and may easily crush and stain walls, furniture and curtains.
- In situations where mites are especially difficult to control, consider employing the services of a professional pest control service.

Indoor Control:

- Once inside a home, clover mites are difficult to control. At first sign of mite invasion, paint or spray window channels and outside frames with a specifically labeled household miticide formulation. Also, treat any other

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Clover mite—*Bryobia praetiosa* Koch

READ AND FOLLOW ALL LABEL INSTRUCTIONS. THIS INCLUDES DIRECTIONS FOR USE, PRECAUTIONARY STATEMENTS (HAZARDS TO HUMANS, DOMESTIC ANIMALS, AND ENDANGERED SPECIES), ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS, RATES OF APPLICATION, NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS, REENTRY INTERVALS, HARVEST RESTRICTIONS, STORAGE AND DISPOSAL, AND ANY SPECIFIC WARNINGS AND/OR PRECAUTIONS FOR SAFE HANDLING OF THE PESTICIDE.

May 2021

It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service that all persons have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a veteran. Purdue University is an Affirmative Action institution. This material may be available in alternative formats.

This work is supported in part by Extension Implementation Grant 2017-70006-27140/ IND011460G4-1013877 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.