

Grey pineapple mealybug, *Dysmicoccus neobrevipes* Beardsley (Pseudococcidae: Hemiptera): an emerging pest of tuberose in India

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Tuberose (*Agave amica*) is a highly valued flower crop in India, known for its consistently high returns and ability to thrive in various climatic conditions. Severe outbreaks of the grey pineapple mealybug, *Dysmicoccus neobrevipes* Beardsley (Hemiptera: Pseudococcidae), have been observed in several villages of Pune district, Maharashtra (India), since 2021, leading to significant economic losses. The present study provides an illustrative morphological diagnosis of *D. neobrevipes* and basic information on its field establishment, impact on tuberose crop, nature of the damage and field symptoms, etc. Surveys conducted in major tuberose-growing areas of Pune district (Maharashtra) revealed that the mealybug primarily infests the underground and basal portion of tuberose plants, causing stunted growth, drooping and ultimately death of the plants. *D. neobrevipes* produces honeydew, fostering sooty mould growth that impairs photosynthesis and reduces flower yield. It also infests tuberose bulbs, spoiling them in storage. Based on primary scientific literature, the present study represents a scientifically confirmed record of *D. neobrevipes* as a new pest of tuberose in India. The ant species *Solenopsis geminata* was found attending to mealybug colonies, aiding their spread and creating a nuisance for farmers during routine field activities. A total of 87.09% of the surveyed fields ($n = 62$) showed mealybug infestation, ranging from 68% to 97%. Raising awareness among the farmers and implementing regular monitoring in tuberose-growing areas are crucial steps for developing effective management practices and preventing the further spread of this pest to other regions.

Keywords: *Dysmicoccus brevipes*, Gulchhadi, *Polianthes tuberosa*, Rajanigandha, *Solenopsis geminata*, Sungandharaja.