OPUNITIASPIS CARINATA (COCKERELL) 1
(HOMOPTERA: COCCOIDEA: DIASPIDIDAE) 2

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INTRODUCTION: Opuntiaspis carinata (Cockerell) was recently collected in Florida for a new continental U.S. record. Apparently the infested plants were shipped to Florida from Mexico via Texas 2 or 3 years ago. In past years, USDA inspectors have intercepted this armored scale insect several times from Guatemala and Mexico.

HABIT: The female armor (fig. 1) is about 2.5 mm long, straight, slender, gray to brownish with a slight median ridge (carina); male is similar in color and shape but smaller. They occur on both leaf surfaces.

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE: The economic importance is unknown, but because one very old record is on "lime", precautions should be taken to limit the spread of this insect.

HOST AND DISTRIBUTION: The only known host in Florida is Beaucarnea recurvata Lem. (ponytail palm), but USDA interceptions have been on species of Anthurium, Citrus, Nolina, Oncidium, Pedilanthus, Philodendron, Theobroma, Tillandsia, and Yucca. In Florida it is known from Dade, Palm Beach, and Polk counties and to date has only been collected in nurseries.

CONTROL: Dimethoate has been used with good results. Follow directions on label for rate of application and safety information.

REFERENCES:

Fig. 1. Opuntiaspis carinata (adult female) (x 30)

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