

📖 Topic Page: [scale insect](#)

Definition: **scale insect** from *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*
Any small plant-sucking insect, order Homoptera, of the superfamily Coccoidea. Some species are major pests – for example, the citrus mealy bug (genus *Pseudococcus*), which attacks citrus fruits in North America. The female is often wingless and legless, attached to a plant by the head and with the body covered with a waxy scale. The rare males are winged.



Image from: [Adults and egg circles of Aleurothrixus floccosus... in Encyclopedia of Insects](#)

Summary Article: **scale insect**
from *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

common name for members of a highly modified group of insects belonging to several families of the superfamily Coccoidea. Scales possess antennae and are characterized by reduced legs. Only the males have wings; females are always wingless. Scales are popularly subdivided into three groups; the armored scales, the unarmored scales, and the mealybugs. The armored scales secrete a wax covering, the shape of which is characteristic for any given species. Under this coat, the insects develop and feed, sucking the sap of plants with their thin tubular mouthparts. The females never leave the protection of the scale after once forming it, but the adult males, which do not feed, develop a single pair of wings, leave the scale, and seek out the females, fertilizing them after the females are under the shell. Among the important armored scale pests of citrus, other fruits, and ornamentals are the San Jose scale, the oyster scale, the purple scale, and the California and Florida red scales. The unarmored scales (or soft scales) are similar to the armored scales except that only a small amount of wax is secreted, which adheres to the insect. Unarmored scale pests of citrus fruits include the black scale and citricola scale. Mealybugs appear as white cottony clusters on citrus, ornamentals, and greenhouse plants. Like other scale insects, newly hatched nymphs, called crawlers, have legs and actively seek out food. When they find a suitable spot, they settle down to feed. Some scales secrete a resinous covering, which is used in the commercial production of shellac, varnish, and paints (see lac). Control of scale insects has been largely by use of natural enemies, especially ladybird beetles and small parasitic wasps, which are natural predators of these pests. Scale insects have proved difficult to control by chemical means. Scale insects are classified in the phylum Arthropoda, class Insecta, order Homoptera, superfamily Coccoidea.

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scale insect. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/scale_insect



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