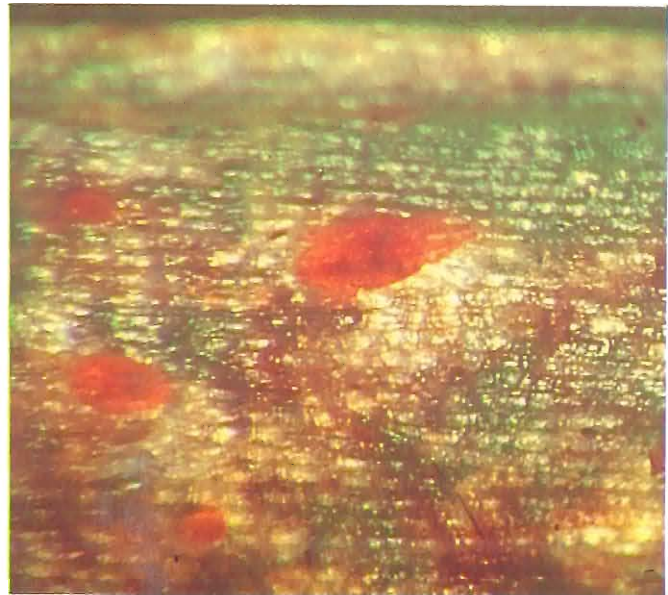




Phalaenopsis mite damage to an orchid plant.



Phalaenopsis mites on an orchid leaf.

Common Name: Phalaenopsis mite
Scientific Name: *Tenuipalpus pacificus* Baker, Tenuipalpidae

Phalaenopsis mite belongs to a group of mites known as false spider mites. It is a widely distributed pest of *Phalaenopsis* and many other genera of orchids. This mite is reddish in color and extremely small. A hand lens is required to see it. Eggs are laid on the surface of the leaves. Nymphs and adults feed on either side of the leaves with damage first appearing as speckled white areas which turn into brown sunken pits as the damage increases. In severe cases, the damage can result in the death of leaves. Unlike the spider mite, no webbing is spun. The phalaenopsis mites concentrate in certain areas of the leaves that generally have thin cutin. Cutin is a protective waxy coating on the outer surface of the leaf. These areas include the sides of the midribs and veins and in terete vandas the channel formed on the upper side of the leaf where the leaf margins meet.

This mite is spread by the use of infested propagation material. It can also be spread within the nurseries by wind, or contaminated tools and clothing.

Control:

1. Avoid using infested material for propagation. Inspect new plants.
2. Maintain sanitary practices when handling plant material to avoid spreading the mites.
3. Initiate a control program once the mites are detected. Consult with an Agricultural Extension Agent for details. You can contact an agent by calling 734-2575, 734-2579, 734-2518 or 734-4753.

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