

Oribatid Mites

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Not much is known about oribatid mites (Fig. 1). Oribatid mites are thought to be scavengers, and are often found in soil and organic matter where they aid in the breakdown of decaying organic matter. Oribatids may be more numerous in wooded areas. These mites may become a nuisance to homeowners when they congregate on or near the home (patios, roofs, plants, etc.) or enter the home. Such incidents are probably associated with organic matter (leaves or moss on a roof, compost, bark; in flower beds, mold on inside or outside walls, etc.). The species we encounter most commonly have wing-like, lateral extensions (pteromorphs) of the notum. This feature, plus the fact they look like “baby” ticks, distinguishes them from all other mites groups.

Management

Oribatid mites should not damage plants or the home and its contents. If mites are entering the home, finding and removing any associated organic matter should help eliminate them. In wooded areas where the organic content of the soil is high, control in some situations may not be practical or effective.



**Fig. 1. Cluster of oribatid mites on a conifer.
By A.L. Antonelli.**