

# *Shivaphis celti* (Hemiptera: Aphididae), a newly introduced woolly aphid infesting white stinkwood trees in South Africa

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## Introduction

During 2016, large numbers of an aphid covered in fluffy white wax were noticed on the foliage of white stinkwood trees (*Celtis africana*) and ornamental nettle trees (*Celtis orientalis*) in Pretoria, Gauteng Province.

Detailed microscopic examination of slide-mounted specimens confirmed that it was the Asian woolly hackberry aphid, *Shivaphis celti* Das (Hemiptera: Aphididae). This is an exotic species that has arrived in South Africa very recently.



## Distribution

*Shivaphis celti* is native to Asia and feeds on species of *Celtis* trees. It has been unintentionally introduced to other parts of the world. In 1997 this aphid was found in Florida, U.S.A., and then in Australia in 2013.

## Damage

No long-term damage to trees has been reported abroad or observed locally, but the honeydew that coats the leaves attracts ants, and provides a substrate for the growth of an unsightly sooty mould.



## Diagnosis

This aphid is conspicuous and easy to recognize by the copious amounts of white wax that it secretes, as well as the tendency for individuals to fly up in swarms when disturbed, much like whiteflies. The adult aphids may be winged or wingless, measuring 2 to 3 mm in length.



Immature female



Wingless adult female



Winged adult female



The antennae have a striped appearance, and the wing veins have dark borders.

Conspicuous wax pore-clusters may be observed on the dorsum of the abdomen in slide-mounted specimens



## Conclusion

The occurrence of the "white stinkwood woolly aphid" in South Africa should be monitored to determine the extent of its distribution, as well as to quantify its potential as a pest of ornamental and indigenous *Celtis* trees.

## Predators

The impact of local natural enemies on population numbers is currently undetermined. So far, several species of ladybird beetles have been observed feeding on the nymphs and adults of this aphid.



## References

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