

# - TWO-SPOTTED SPIDER MITES -



Spider mite adults.

Two spotted spider mites, *Tetranychus urticae*, (order Acariformes) are not insects. They are related to spiders and have 8 legs. They are pests of a wide range of plants and cause extensive crop damage worldwide. They feed on plant sap and tissue. They are usually found on the undersides of leaves and in times of heavy infestation, they produce webbing can occur on the undersurfaces of plants.

## Life Cycle

Spider mites go through 5 stages in about 2 weeks. They lay their eggs on the undersides of leaves. They then go through a larval stage followed by two nymphal stages (protonymph and deutonymph). They feed throughout their life cycle and go through resting periods to form legs and moult to their next life stage.

## Identification

Adult spider mites can have two color phases. In the summer and spring they are green-brown in color and have two distinct spots on their back. During the winter months, adult females go through diapause and turn orange or red while they overwinter and become dormant in cracks and crevices in greenhouses. Larvae have only 6 legs where as nymphs and adults have 8. The color of larvae and nymphs vary depending on what they feed on, but usually a shade of green.

### Photo Credits & References:

J. K. Clark, UC Statewide IPM Program, University of California, Whitney Cranshaw. Colorado State Univ. Available: [Forestryimages.org](http://Forestryimages.org), Koppert Biological Systems. 1992. *Knowing and Recognizing: The Biology of Glasshouse Pests and Their Natural Enemies*.



Red color phase of adult female spider mite.