

Significant Pest Interception for February 2013

Interception of Mealybug *Phenacoccus multicerarii* with Rosemary from Mexico

A 1.5-mm-long *Phenacoccus multicerarii* Granara de Willink (Hemiptera: Pseudococcidae) was intercepted in an air cargo shipment of *Rosmarinus officinalis* from Mexico. This find is a first for the species for ports in the State of Florida. The mealybug species had only been detected twice previously, once in San Francisco (2012) with basil leaves and once in Los Angeles (2009) in baggage on unidentified leaves. In all three of these instances the origin was Mexico. In Florida, there have been infestations in several locations, and the recorded host plants have been numerous: *Hydrangea*, *Begonia*, *Lysimachia*, *Hosta*, *Aloe vera*, *Ipomoea*, *Rhododendron*, *Ficus*, and several others. Because there have been no reports of economic damage elsewhere, it is difficult to know whether this species will become a significant pest. Specialists in Florida now suggest that multiple host plants in various plant families indicate that the species will be polyphagous and perhaps injurious. Some species of the large genus *Phenacoccus* are known pests throughout the world. One example is *P. manihoti* Matile-Ferrero, the cassava mealybug, which has become extremely destructive wherever cassava is grown in Africa.

