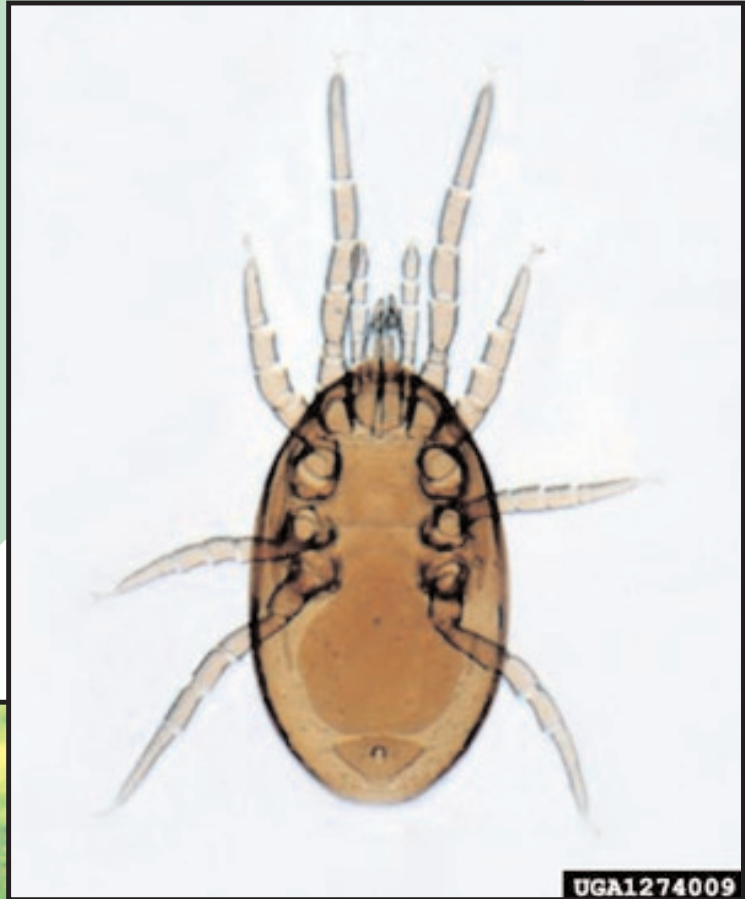


Mite



UGA1274009



UGA1123046

GARDEN EARTH
NATURALIST
ECO-SERVICE CARDS

MITE

FAMILY: several

ORDER: Acarina

IDENTIFICATION CLUES



- ◆ very small, most less than 1/16 inch
- ◆ oval body (head, thorax and abdomen are not separate)
- ◆ 4 pairs of jointed legs
- ◆ jaw is modified into pincers (if predatory) or piercing stylet (if parasitic)



Where to Look:

Mites live everywhere, even in oceans and cold arctic regions. They can be found on plants, the ground, in dust, on furniture, on pets and even on you.

Who Eats It?

Birds, predatory insects and other invertebrates eat mites.



LIFE CYCLE

The life cycle is relatively short. Most mites lay eggs but some have live births. In some species the larval mite has only six legs and must go through several molts before becoming an adult mite with the typical eight legs.

What It Eats.

Many mites feed on fluids. Some are parasitic and live on animal fluids. Other species of mites eat aphids, eggs, fungi, bacteria, and decaying plant matter. Some mites use enzymes to liquify their food before eating.



Did You Know

Mites date back over 400,000,000 years in the fossil record, making them one of the oldest groups of animals on land.

Role in the Ecosystem

Mites are important recyclers as well as controllers of populations of pest organisms.