Eriophyid mites
Several species
Order Acari, Family Eriophyidae; leaf vagrant, gall,
erinea, rust, or eriophyid mites

Host plants: Many species of eriophyid mites feed on
deciduous and coniferous trees and shrubs.

Description: Adult eriophyid mites are elongated and
have only two pairs of anterior legs. Most species are
much less than 1 mm in length and are variously colored;
most are white to yellow. Many species are so minute
that a dissecting microscope is needed to confirm their
presence.

Life history: There are usually several generations each
year. Many species have complex life histories. The
biology and habits of many species are still largely
unknown. Most activity occurs during cool spring and
fall weather.

Overwintering: Bark or bud scales.

Damage symptoms: Eriophyid mites can create erinea
galls formed by expanded leaf hairs. Other eriophyid
mites create bladder galls, are vagrants on the leaf
surface, or distort flowers and foliage. Feeding by va-
grants causes red patches (russeting) and leaf stunting.

Monitoring: Look for any of the color changes or abnor-
malities in leaves or buds described above. In the ab-
sence of any obvious cause of such symptoms, use a
hand lens or dissecting microscope to inspect foliage
more closely. Galls may be broken open to detect the
mites within.

Chemical control: Most galls cause aesthetic injury and
do not kill their hosts. Spray 7–10 days prior to bud break
of the plants. Oils should be applied when plants become
active in spring.

Biological control: Predatory phytoseiid mites can usually
be found with these herbivorous mites.

Plant mortality risk: Low

Biorational pesticides: abamectin, horticultural oil,
insecticidal soap

Conventional pesticides: bifenthrin, carbaryl, dicofol,
fenbutatin oxide, lambda-cyhalothrin
Eriophyid mites (continued)

Pouchgalls on alder caused by eriophyid mites. (W51)
Photo: Whitney Cranshaw

Vagrant eriophyid mite adults; note the elongate cigar shape and the two pairs of legs around the head. (98)
Photo: John Davidson

Pouchgalls on cherry leaves caused by eriophyid mites. (97)

Galls caused by eriophyid mites. (98)
Photo: John Davidson

Erinea on maple caused by eriophyid mites. (W49)
Photo: Whitney Cranshaw

Scanning electron microscope close-up of eriophyid mite showing the elongate cigar shape and the two pair of legs around the head. (99) Photo: Kiefer et al. from USDA, ARS, Agric. Handbook. Number 573.