



**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES**  
**COMMISSIONER ADAM H. PUTNAM**

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**PLANT INSPECTION ADVISORY**

NO. 2-18-2016

**DATE:** February 18, 2016  
**TO:** Bureau of Plant & Apiary Inspectors and Supervisors  
**SUBJECT:** **Aquatic Foliage Scale**

A new aquatic scale was recently detected at a pet store on the aquarium plant Asian water fern. This is the first reported find in Florida. This scale is reported from the Caribbean, African and Asian countries and considered established in Puerto Rico and Jamaica.

During your aquatic and pest store inspection activities, please keep a look out for this pest. Samples should be taken and submitted on all scale detected.

**The following pages to this advisory is a BOLO concerning this pest.**

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
Division of Plant Industry

## Regulatory Incident: *Moestus* soft scale on imported aquarium foliage

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Division of Plant Industry Plant Inspectors should become familiar with a soft scale species that was collected from Asian water fern (*Bolbitis heteroclita* (C. Presl) Ching) by DPI inspector Lisa Hassell (Nassau County). Asian water fern is an aquarium plant sold at pet supply stores such as Petco and Petsmart. *Coccus moestus* (Fig. A), which has no approved common name, is recorded in several Caribbean, African and Asian countries. It is likely to be established in at least Puerto Rico and Jamaica.

Asian water fern (Family Dryopteridaceae) has not previously been documented as a host, but Bird's nest fern, *Asplenium nidus* L. (Family Aspleniaceae), is a host, and both plant families are in the order Polypodiales. However, other hosts include important fruit-tree species, such as mango (*Mangifera indica*), cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*), avocado (*Persea americana*) and breadfruit (*Artocarpus altilis*), and ornamentals such as hibiscus and twinberry (*Myrcianthes fragrans*, also known as Simpson's stopper).

Positive identification of this species requires slide-mounted specimens. An important character that may be visible in the field with a hand lens is the presence around the dorsal submargin of extremely fine 'pencils' of wax; however, these are fragile and likely to be broken. Two small, black, eye-spots are prominent, but this is shared with other *Coccus* species.

The Asian water fern plants were shipped from Thailand and packaged in California in cylindrical plastic tubes ~3 inches in diameter x ~12 inches high. The distributor also supplies Petsmart, but uses a different label on similar packaging. The Petco label is shown (Fig. D).

