



Couch Grass Scale

› **Scientific Name:** *Odonaspis ruthae*

› **Order:** Hemiptera

› **Susceptible Species**

- Primarily affects couch grass (*Cynodon* spp.) but can also be found in buffalo and centipede grasses.

› **Description**

- **Immature/larval stage:** White or grey smaller adult. Similar in appearance to adult life stage though smaller in size, generally less than 1mm in diameter.
- **Mature/adult stage:** Clam-shaped, mollusc-like scale insect with a white, armoured body up to 1.6mm long. A circular to ovular shaped, mollusc like scale insect generally cream to pink in colour and up to 1.6mm in diameter. Usually found in congregations around the nodes and crown.

› **Biology and Lifecycle**

- Little is known about the lifecycle of this species, though it is thought to take 10-14 days for completion of the lifecycle from egg lay to maturity.

› **Damage**

- Damage occurs from spring through to autumn as fluid is sucked from the turf plant as the scale insects feed underneath their shells.
- Turf often turns yellow and exhibits symptoms of drought stress in patchy areas. When damage is severe the yellowing will often turn to brown and the foliage can die back.
- Damage will occur most heavily in areas with an abundance of thatch.
- Symptoms are most evident in drought conditions as pest feeding compromises plant moisture efficiency, and recovery is slowed due to a lack of water.

› **Management Tips**

- Prevent excessive thatch accumulation from occurring.
- Ensure adequate soil moisture is available during periods of high pest pressure. This will reduce symptom expression and improve rate of recovery.

Adult



Adult



Damage

