

Felted Beech Coccus (Beech Scale)

Cryptococcus fagisuga

Identification:

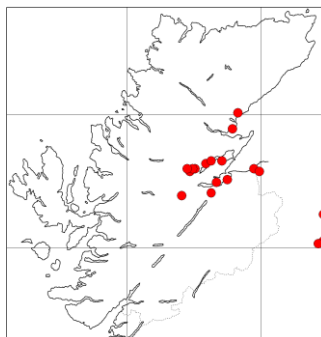
In heavy infestations it shows as fluffy white patches up to 1cm across on the trunks of old Beech. The 'fluff' is a waxy substance produced to protect the eggs and nymphs. Young colonies appear as thin lines of white dots, in narrow vertical fissures on the trunk. These can stand out as odd on the normally smooth Beech bark. A lens will reveal the insects in various life-stages.



Beech Scale.
Photo © J. McKellar

Distribution:

Until early 2018, when Jimmy McKellar wrote about it in our *Highland Naturalist*, there were few detailed records in Scotland, but we now have several reports on our eastern side (and also in Edinburgh and on Deeside). It is likely to have been seriously overlooked.



Records of Beech Scale in the HBRG database at 11 Aug '18.

When to look for it:

It may be found all year.

Similar species:

Check that the white patches are not lichens or discoloration of the bark. A woolly aphid *Phyllaphis fagi* occurs on young Beech leaves but the 'wool' is attached to individual aphids rather than forming a static woolly patch.

Notes:

More information is in this [Forestry Commission paper](#). The species is all female and parthenogenetic. Heavy infestations can cause colonisation by the fungus *Nectria coccinea*, so look for its [red fruiting bodies](#), and let us know if you find them.