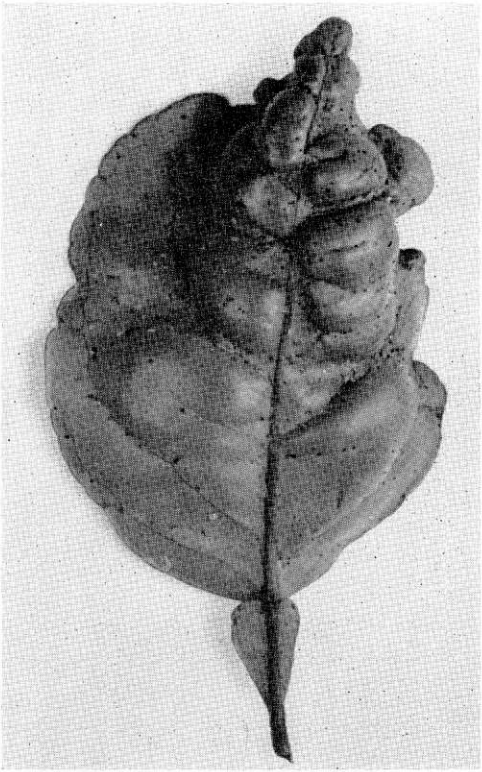

Fig. 7.—Young grapefruit leaf distorted by red scale attack shortly after it had unfolded. The earlier the attack, the worse the distortion will be. The black specks on the foliage are mostly early second stage scale. (Slightly enlarged.)

During the summer the life cycle for Florida red scale can be completed in less than six weeks. The development is typical of that of other armored scales and apparently four or more generations occur each year. There is a marked tendency for the females to feed on the under sides of the leaves and the males on the upper surfaces. Also, the scales appear to prefer fruit to foliage in the late summer and fall, and clusters of fruit may be heavily infested while adjacent leaves show only a few scales.

Florida red scale infests only the leaves and fruit. In spite of this, it may cause a very heavy leaf drop. The defoliated branches then die. When infestations are severe, the damage may be worse than with purple scale. In numerous instances the authors have observed almost complete defoliation from red scale, accompanied by extreme loss of bearing wood. Florida red scale is often slow to develop in the spring, but it may become very severe by August. Maximum damage usually occurs in late summer and fall.

Florida red scales cause yellow spots on the fruit, just the reverse of purple scale injury. Thus, a green fruit will be speckled with yellow spots where live red scales are present. When red scales attack young fruit they cause pitting, which may be so severe that the fruit never is able to recover. Such coarse-peeled fruit will be thrown out of grade. Similarly, young foliage may be distorted when attacked by young scales (see