Pacific Pests, Pathogens and Weeds - Online edition

Onion thrips (117)

Summary

- Worldwide distribution. On onions, a preferred host, but infestations also occur on onion relatives, beans, brassicas, carrot, cotton, cucurbits, legumes, papaya, pineapple, potato, tobacco, tomato and many ornamentals. At least 25 plant families are infested.
- Thrips pierce cells and suck up the contents, leaving white specks. They spread viruses.
- Spread is by flight from weeds, on air currents, and in the trade in bulbs.
- Natural enemies. many predators.
- Cultural control: nurseries far from field crops; inspect transplants carefully; avoid planting new crops next to old, and not downwind; remove weeds and "volunteers"; mulch; use yellow sticky cards to check for thrips; collect plant trash and burn after harvest; 2-3-year rotations.
- Chemical control: soap, white or horticultural oils, neem or spinosad; note, thrips have developed resistance to many pesticides, which will kill natural enemies.

Common Name

Onion thrips

Scientific Name

Thrips tabaci

Photo 1. Silvery-white feeding patches on the leaves of shallot from infestations of the onion thrips, *Thrips tabaci*.

Photo 2. Adult *Thrips tabaci* are about 1.5 mm long with red eyes.

Photo 3. Colours of onion thrips, *Thrips tabaci*, vary from yellow to brown, through green; compare Photo 2.

Photo 4. Adult thrips, *Thrips tabaci*.

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Information from CABI (2014) Thrips tabaci (onion thrips). Crop Protection Compendium (https://www.cabi.org/cpc/datasheet/53746); and Onion thrips (2013) Cooperative Extension. University of Minnesota. (*http://cues.cfans.umn.edu/old/inter/inmine/Thripk.html*); and *Thrips tabaci*. Wikipedia. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thrips_tabaci); and from Waterhouse DF, Norris KR (1989) *Thrips tabaci* Linderman. *Biological Control Pacific Prospects - Supplement* 1.

Photos 1&2 Rehan Silva University of Queensland.

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