

Thrips - general (086)

Summary

- Worldwide distribution. On tomato, capsicum (**see Fact Sheet no. 106**), melon, onion (**see Fact Sheet no. 117**), and many other crops. An important pest.
- Thrips are small insects, living within the buds of leaves and fruit, sucking the sap; leaves become brown on the underside, and fruit show silver scars.
- Eggplant, tomato, melon, onion, and many other hosts are attacked, as well as weeds.
- Natural enemies: predatory thrips prey on plant-eating thrips, and there are other predators.
- Cultural control: avoid over-lapping crops; rotate crops; grow yard-long beans between rows to stop spread; destroy weeds; burn, or bury crop remains after harvest.
- Chemical control: PDPs: derris, chilli, or neem; or soap, horticultural or white oils; use the biopesticide, spinosad. Alternatively, synthetic pyrethroids, but they are likely to kill natural enemies.

Common Name

Thrips are named after the plants that they live on, e.g., bean thrips, chilli thrips, western flower thrips, melon thrips, onion thrips, tobacco thrips. Some species are predators.

Scientific Name

Thrips and *Frankliniella* species. A number of thrips have been identified on vegetables and flowers in Pacific island countries.



Photo 1. Brown or bronzed leaf damage on tomato caused by thrips.



Photo 2. Scarring of capsicum at the calyx end of the fruit.



Photo 4. Thrips damage on capsicum



Photo 3. Scarring of capsicum fruit. The damage was done when the fruit was much younger and the thrips were enclosed in the flowers.



Photo 5. Thrips damage on capsicum fruit.



Photo 6. Wilt, drying and early death of potato leaves caused by thrips infestation.



Photo 7. Thrips adults and nymphs on the underside of a potato leaf.



Photo 8. Adults and larvae of Cuban laurel thrips, *Gynaikothrips ficorum*, on *Ficus*. They puncture the leaf surface and pits develop.



Photo 9. Cuban laurel thrips, *Gynaikothrips ficorum*, on *Ficus benjamina*, with eggs, nymphs and adults.



Photo 10. White banded thrips, *Aeolothrips* sp., a predatory thrips.



Photo 11. A minute pirate bug, *Orius* sp., attacking whitefly larvae.

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Information from Trips (2021) Wikipedia. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thrips>) and J. Bethke JA (2014) Thrips. How to manage pests in gardens and landscapes. UC/IPM. (<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7429.html>); and from Which thrips is that? A guide to the key species transmitting Tomato spotted wilt virus in NSW. Compiled by Marilyn Steiner. NSW Department of Primary Industries. (https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/177324/tswv-transmitting-thrips.pdf). Photos 4-7 Mani Mua, SPC, Sigatoka Research Station, Fiji. Photo 10 Diane Alston, Utah State University, Bugwood.org. Photo 11 Wikipedia. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orius>). It is not known if this insect is in Pacific island countries; it is given as an example of this type of bug.

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