

Fact sheet

Melon thrips

What are Melon thrips?

Melon thrips (*Thrips palmi*) attack a wide variety of crops including beans, capsicum, cucumbers, eggplant, melons, pumpkin, squash and zucchini. Weed hosts include plants from the Cucurbitaceae and Solanaceae families. This pest is also known to be a potential virus vector.

What do they look like?

Adult melon thrips are about 1.5 mm in length and are a yellow-orange colour. The adults have feather-like wings with black hairs along the fringe, which resembles a black line down the body of the thrip. Juveniles (nymphs) are smaller, paler in colour and wingless.

Melon thrips are found most often on the underside of leaves, in flowers and on fruit.

What can they be confused with?

Melon thrips can be confused with other thrip species and are likely to be distinguished by a lack of response to current insecticides. If normal insect controls do not work, have the pest checked out by an expert.

What should I look for

Infested plants will show an overall stunting. Leaf feeding of the thrips results in a silvery effect becoming present on the surface. Under high infestation levels there is a bronzing of the leaves and they later crinkle and die.

Fruit on infested plants are reduced in quality, normally through the development of scar tissue on the surface.



Edith Smith, Shady Oak Butterfly Farm

Melon thrips usually reside on the underside of leaves



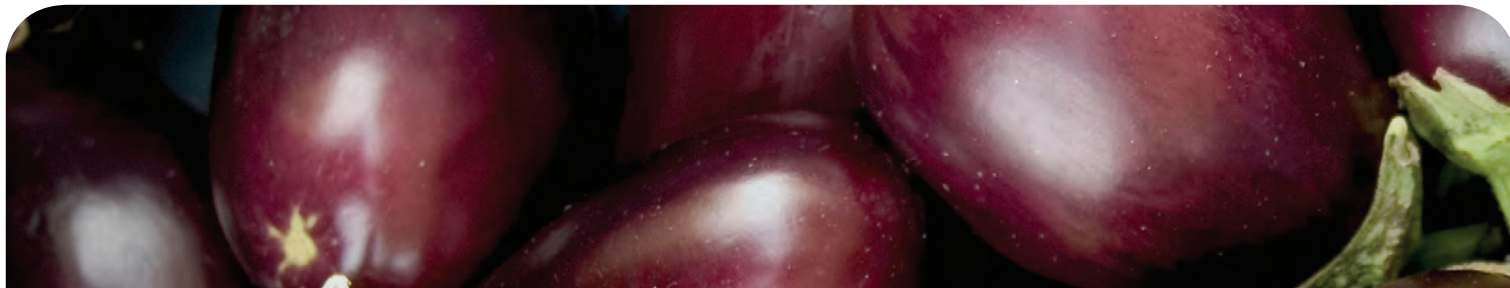
J. Guyot, INRA, Pointe-à-Pitre, Bugwood.org

Heavy infestations cause leaf bronzing



Division of Plant Industry Archive, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Bugwood.org

Adult Melon thrips are a yellow-orange colour and 1.5 mm in length



Fruit infested with Melon thrips can show scarring

J. Guyot, INRA, Pointe-à-Pitre, Bugwood.org



Adult Melon thrips have feather-like wings with black hair along the fringe

Plant Protection Service Archive, Bugwood.org



Affected leaves appear silvery as Melon thrips kill the leaf surface cells

R. Mau, University of Hawaii

How do they spread?

Thrips can be spread as hitch-hikers on machinery, clothes and plant material.

The movement of certain produce from infested zones to 'clean' zones requires fumigation. Produce from the Northern Territory must be inspected by quarantine staff prior to entry into South Australia.

Where is it now?

Melon thrips originated in Malaysia and Indonesia and have now spread to south-east Asia, Japan, Papua New Guinea, North America, the Caribbean islands, South America and Europe. In Australia, they are present in Darwin and South-East Queensland.

How can I protect my farm from Melon thrips?

Regular monitoring for Melon thrips following after transplanting material increases the chances of detecting an infestation early. Report any thrips infestations that do not respond to commonly used controls, both chemical and biological.

If you see anything unusual, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline

**EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881**



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