

Onion thrips

Thrips tabaci (exotic biotypes)

What crops does it affect?

Wide host range including onions, garlic, leeks, shallots, horseradish, daisies, cotton and *Cucurbitaceae* species.

What does it look like?

A complete generation requires 3–4 weeks during the summer months. Five to eight generations may occur each year.

Adults: Yellow and brown body (<2mm long) with two pairs of hairy wings. They spend the winter in protected sites under plants and debris in onion fields and fly readily when disturbed.

Eggs: White to yellow; kidney-bean shaped; microscopic in size. Develop within leaf tissue with one end near the leaf surface.

Larvae: Growth stages 1 and 2 are <1mm in length and are the active, feeding stages. They are white to pale yellow; long and thin body. They resemble adults without wings.

Which part of the plant will be damaged?

Leaves, bulbs, flowers.

What should I look for?

Water loss through the damaged leaf surface may cause stress and reduced plant growth. Onions are most sensitive to thrips injury during the rapid bulb enlargement phase. Fast plant maturity due to thrips injury may shorten the bulb growth period. Following harvest and during storage, thrips may continue to feed on onion bulbs, causing scars that reduce quality and visual appearance of bulbs.

How does it spread?

Infested plant material. Adults are capable of flight.



Larvae at base of onion leaf.

Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org



Leaf scarring injury to onion.

Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

**IF YOU SEE ANYTHING UNUSUAL,
CALL THE EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE**

 **1800 084 881**

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