

Tomato potato psyllid

Bactericera cockerelli



Plant Health
AUSTRALIA

ESTABLISHED PEST

What crops does it affect?

Solanaceae species including potato, tomato, capsicum, eggplant and Convolvulaceae species including sweetpotato.

What does it look like?

The psyllid is a tiny sap-sucking insect that goes through three stages of development – egg, nymph and adult.

Adult psyllids resemble small winged cicadas and are about 3mm long. The body is brownish and has white or yellowish markings on the chest and a broad white band on the abdomen. Wings are transparent and held vertically over the body.

Eggs are <1mm long and are white when first laid, then turn yellow to orange after a few hours.

Nymphs are up to 2mm long, oval shaped, flattened and scale-like in appearance.

Which part of the plant will be damaged?

Above ground then whole plant.

What should I look for?

Symptoms of psyllid feeding include the appearance of 'psyllid sugar', yellowing or purpling of the midribs and leaf margins. The leaves are often cupped, narrow and point upright giving the plant a feathery appearance. Psyllid yellows, a syndrome that can develop during psyllid infestation, can be easily confused with the symptoms of the exotic disease zebra chip (page 41).

Any signs of yellowing, stunting, leaf narrowing, curling or cupping, leaf purpling, fruit distortion and shortened internodes in your potato crop should be investigated closely due to the risk of infection by the disease zebra chip (currently exotic).

How does it spread?

The psyllid can spread through the movement of plants and plant materials including fruit, vegetables and nursery stock, on horticultural machinery and equipment, and also by wind and flight.

Adult psyllids are capable of flight and move short distances. Wind currents can carry adult psyllids long distances as can machinery and vehicles. Juvenile psyllids do not fly and can be transported via infested plant material. Zebra chip requires the tomato potato psyllid as a vector for movement from plant to plant.

Distribution in Australia

Western Australia (since February 2017).

State movement controls or impacted markets

Movement controls exist for various plant products leaving Western Australia destined for South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania. Movement controls also exist in Western Australia to prevent further spread within the state.



Adult tomato potato psyllid.

Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

DISCLAIMER: The material in this publication is for general information only and no person should act, or fail to act on the basis of this material without first obtaining professional advice. Plant Health Australia and all persons acting for Plant Health Australia expressly disclaim liability with respect to anything done in reliance on this publication.