



Tomato potato psyllid

Tomato potato psyllid (*Bactericera cockerelli*) is an exotic plant pest which feeds on tomato, potato, capsicum, chilli, tamarillo and sweet potato, and solanaceous weeds like nightshade, leading to loss of plant vigour and yield.



It is important to be vigilant for signs of the pest and report suspect tomato potato psyllid.

What is a psyllid?

The psyllid is a tiny sap-sucking insect. Tomato potato psyllids go through three stages of development – egg, nymph and adult.

Adults and nymphs cause injury to plants by feeding with sucking mouth parts.

- Adult psyllids resemble a winged aphid and are about 3mm long. The body is brownish and has white or yellowish markings on the thorax and a broad white band on the abdomen. Wings are transparent and rest roof-like over the body.
- Nymphs are up to 2mm long, oval shaped, flattened and scale-like in appearance. Young nymphs are yellow with a pair of red eyes and three pairs of short legs. Older nymphs are greenish and fringed with hairs and have visible wing buds.
- Psyllid eggs are less than 1mm long and are attached to the plant by a short vertical stalk. They are usually laid on the lower surface of leaves or as a halo around the leaf edge. Eggs are white when first laid then turn yellow to orange after a few hours.

The tomato potato psyllid can carry the bacterium “*Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum*”, which is associated with the ‘zebra chip’ disease in potato.

Symptoms of psyllid infestation to look for

Look for damage on the underside of leaves.

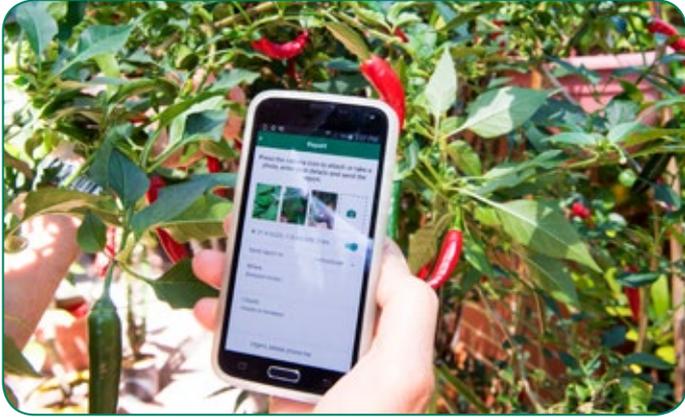
Signs of tomato potato psyllid include:

- Insects jumping from the foliage when disturbed.
- Severe wilting of plants caused by high numbers of psyllids feeding.
- Yellowing of leaf margins and upward curling of the leaves.
- White sugar-like granules (excreted by adults and nymphs), which coat plant leaves and stems, and can lead to the development of sooty mould.
- Ants on plants may be symptomatic of the presence of sugars.
- Stem death symptoms similar to other potato and tomato disorders.

Report the pest if you find it

If you suspect tomato potato psyllid, send a photo to the Department of Agriculture and Food, WA via the [MyPestGuide Reporter](#) app available from the [Google Play](#) or the [App Store](#) or email photos with your name, address and mobile number to info@agric.wa.gov.au. Alternatively, call the [Pest and Disease Information Service](#) on 1800 084 881.

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Above: Mature adult psyllid in comparison to 5 cent piece. Note the small size of the insect and how the wings rest roof-like over the body.



Top left: Use the MyPestGuide Reporter app to report the pest to the department.

Middle: Adult psyllids are darker in colour than nymphs, which are up to 2mm long, oval shaped, flattened and scale-like in appearance.



Bottom: Tomato potato psyllid can be found on the underside of leaves and go through three stages in their development – egg, nymph and adult.

Biosecurity reminder

Practice sound crop hygiene/biosecurity practices to prevent the entry, establishment and spread of pests and diseases.

- Check the plants you purchase are free of pests and don't bring infested plants into your property.
- Regularly monitor your plants for any unfamiliar pests or diseases.
- Report any suspect pests or diseases to the Department of Agriculture and Food's Pest and Disease Information Service (PaDIS) by email at info@agric.wa.gov.au or freecall 1800 084 881.
- The [Pest and Disease Information Service \(PaDIS\)](#) provides advisory and identification services on animal and plant pests, weeds and diseases that impact Western Australia's agriculture and food industries.
- Report suspect pests or diseases via the [MyPestGuide Reporter](#) app available from the [Google Play](#) or the [App Store](#).

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