



9 February 2017

Biosecurity alert - Tomato potato psyllid

Current situation

The Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (DAFWA) is undertaking surveillance in commercial crops and backyard gardens in the Perth area, following the suspect detection of tomato potato psyllid (*Bactericera cockerelli*).

The tomato potato psyllid can significantly impact production, attacking a range of plants in the Solanaceae family including potato, tomato, eggplant, capsicum and chilli.

It has been detected in a commercial property north of Perth, a backyard vegetable patch in Belmont and backyard tomatoes in two properties in Mount Hawthorn.

The impacted properties have been quarantined, and the movement of host material (plant and vegetable) from these properties has been restricted.

DNA barcoding is underway to determine the exact species of the pest. The results are expected this week.

If confirmed, this is the first time the psyllid has been detected in Australia. It is present in other countries including the USA, Central America and New Zealand.

The tomato potato psyllid can carry the bacterium "*Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum*", causing the 'zebra chip' disease in potato. Testing for the bacterium is underway.

Check your crops

Commercial growers are urged to check for signs of the psyllid and report any unusual detections to the department using the [MyPestGuide Reporter](#) app.

Growers are advised not to spray specifically for the psyllid until their crops have been surveyed and appropriate chemicals for use have been identified.

How to report the pest

[MyPestGuide Reporter](#) app is available from the [Google Play Store](#) and [Apple App Store](#).

This app is a photographic reporting tool which lets users take up to four photos, map pest observations and communicate directly with the department.

If you don't have a mobile device you can add, view and report the pest via the department website agric.wa.gov.au

Alternatively, email your photo with your name and address to info@agric.wa.gov.au or contact the department's Pest and Disease Information Service on 1800 084 881.

Practice sound farm biosecurity procedures to prevent the entry, establishment and spread of pests and diseases. More information on biosecurity is available at the Farm Biosecurity website farmbiosecurity.com.au

What action is being taken?

The Department of Agriculture and Food is working with the horticulture industry, including peak bodies, VegetablesWA and the Potato Growers Association of WA, to respond and minimise the tomato potato psyllid impact by:

- undertaking surveillance in metropolitan and regional areas to determine spread, and
- liaising with other State jurisdictions, the Federal department and industry through the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests.



Tomato potato psyllid: mature adult psyllid in comparison to a 5 cent piece. Note the small size of the insect and how the wings are held vertically.

Industry contacts for growers

VegetablesWA

Phone: 08 9481 0834

Email: office@vegetableswa.com.au

Potato Growers Association of WA

Phone: (08) 9481 0834

Email: potatoes@vegetableswa.com.au

Department of Agriculture and Food, WA

Brenda Coutts, Industry Liaison

Phone: 0429 193 973

Email: brenda.coutts@agric.wa.gov.au

Further information and general enquiries

- More information, including how to look for and report the pest, is available from the department website at agric.wa.gov.au
- Pest and Disease Information Service
Phone: 1800 084 881
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