

Tomato Potato Psyllid

In response to the recent detection of Tomato Potato Psyllid in Western Australia, Agriculture Victoria is urging all growers, nurseries and importers to increase surveillance and step up their biosecurity practices.

WHAT IS TOMATO POTATO PSYLLID?

The Tomato Potato Psyllid (TPP) is a small sap-sucking, winged insect that resembles a tiny cicada. TPP attacks a range of plants in the Solanaceae family, which includes potato, tomato, eggplant, capsicum, chilli and tamarillo. It also attacks sweet potato.

TPP can transmit the bacterium CLso (Candidatus *Liberibacter solanacearum*), which is the causal agent of 'Zebra Chip' disease in potatoes.

TPP and the bacterium do not pose a risk to human health.

Growers are advised to remain vigilant and to regularly check their crops. The recent detections of TPP in Western Australia should serve as a sharp reminder to all growers of the importance of best practice biosecurity protocols.

IMPORT RESTRICTIONS

Victoria has imposed restrictions on the importation of any risk material from WA as a precaution.

There have been no confirmed reports of TPP in Victoria.

Agriculture Victoria biosecurity officers are undertaking strategically targeted compliance patrol visits to businesses trading in host fruit and vegetables and nursery stock in both metropolitan and regional Victoria.

For more information on the restrictions on the movement of TPP host material into Victoria, please read the latest [Industry Notice](#) or contact your local Agriculture Victoria Plant Standards Officer by telephone on 136 186 or emailing market.access@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

IDENTIFICATION

TPP is a small sap-sucking, winged insect (about 3mm), which resembles a tiny cicada.

Check for the TPP on the underside of leaves. A noticeable sign is the presence of small insects jumping from the foliage when disturbed. Adult psyllids are sometimes called jumping plant lice as they readily jump and fly when disturbed.

TPP go through three stages in their development – egg, nymph and adult.

The more mature adults are darker in colour, with a brownish body and white or yellowish markings on the thorax and a broad white band on the abdomen.

Its wings are transparent and held vertically over the body.

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

Psyllid eggs are less than 1mm long and are white when first laid, then turn yellow to orange after a few hours.



TPP Adult (image courtesy of Pia Scanlon, Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia)

CHECKING FOR TPP INFESTATION

When it's present in a crop, the noticeable signs of TPP include:

- Insects jumping from the foliage when disturbed. Adult psyllids are sometimes called jumping plant lice as they readily jump and fly when disturbed.
- Severe wilting of plants occurs when there are large numbers of psyllids feeding.
- Yellowing of leaf margins and upward curling of the leaves.
- White sugar-like granules that are excreted by adults and nymphs. These granules coat the plant leaves and stems, and can lead to the development of sooty mould.
- Honeydew and psyllid sugar make the plants sticky and they often appear dirty.
- Shortening of stem internodes occurs.
- The death of the stem is similar to other potato and tomato disorders.



TPP nymphs (image courtesy of Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia)



TPP adults (image courtesy of Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia)



Honeydew and psyllid sugar make the plants sticky and they often appear dirty (image courtesy of the New Zealand Arthropod Factsheet Series Number 60)



Agriculture Victoria biosecurity officers demonstrate how to lay a sticky trap (image courtesy of Agriculture Victoria)

REPORTING SUSPECTED CASES OF TPP

If you suspect an outbreak of TPP has occurred, contact the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline by calling 1800 084 881 or Agriculture Victoria by calling 136 186 or by emailing plant.protection@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

Growers are reminded that it is an offence under the *Plant Biosecurity Act 2010* not to report a suspect case of TPP.