

Tomato potato psyllid

Factsheet



About Tomato potato psyllid (TPP)

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.

TPP can affect plant growth, reduce crop yield and spread a serious plant disease known as 'zebra chip' in potato, caused by the *Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum* (CLso) bacterium. CLso has not been detected in Australia.

TPP stages of development

TPP has three stages of development — egg, nymph and adult. All stages are very small (less than 3mm) but can be seen with the naked eye. Adults and nymphs cause injury to plants when feeding.



- Eggs are less than 1mm long and 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.

- Nymphs are up to 2mm long, oval shaped and have a flattened scale-like appearance.
- Young nymphs are yellow with a pair of red eyes.
- Older nymphs are greenish, fringed with hairs and have visible wing buds.

- Adults resemble small winged cicadas in appearance, but are the size of an aphid (about 3mm long).
- The body is brownish and has white or yellowish markings, and a broad white band on the abdomen.
- Wings are transparent and rest roof-like over the body.



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L-R: Dull fruit colour from TPP infestation.
Psyllid sugars on a leaf.

Signs and symptoms of TPP

Commercial and residential growers of host crops should regularly check for signs of TPP.

Look for:

- insect life stages on the underside of leaves and signs of leaf damage in host plants
- adult TPP jumping from foliage when disturbed
- stunting and yellowing of growth tips in host plants
- yellowing or purpling of leaf margins
- ‘cupping’ or upward curling of leaves
- severe wilting of plants caused by high numbers of TPP feeding
- ‘psyllid sugars’ — white sugar-like granules excreted by adults and nymphs, which coat leaves and stems, and can lead to growth of sooty mould
- stem death symptoms similar to other potato and tomato disorders



EARLY DETECTION IS IMPORTANT IN ANY PEST MANAGEMENT SCENARIO.

How can I protect my property from TPP?

- Regularly monitor your plants for unfamiliar pests or diseases.
- Apply sound biosecurity practices to prevent the entry, establishment and spread of pests and diseases on your property.
- Check planting material you purchase is free of pests.
- Don't bring infested plants into your property.

Pest and disease reporting and identification



Report unfamiliar pests to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on **1800 084 881**. This number will put you in contact with your state or territory department of primary industries.



For current updates on TPP in Western Australia, visit agric.wa.gov.au/tpp

This factsheet is an initiative of the national TPP Transition to Management Plan.

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Help limit the spread of the Tomato potato psyllid

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