

BIOSECURITY SA – Plant Health

Exotic Plant Pest Hotline: **1800 084 881** (available 24 hours)

Email: [PIRSA.planthealth@sa.gov.au](mailto:PIRSA.planthealth@sa.gov.au)

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BIOSECURITY SA  
PIRSA

## Melon thrips

### *Thrips palmi* Karny

Melon thrips (*Thrips palmi*) attack a wide variety of crops including beans, capsicum, cucumbers, eggplant, melons, pumpkin, squash and zucchini. Weed hosts include plants from the Cucurbitaceae and Solanaceae families. This pest is also known to be a potential virus vector.

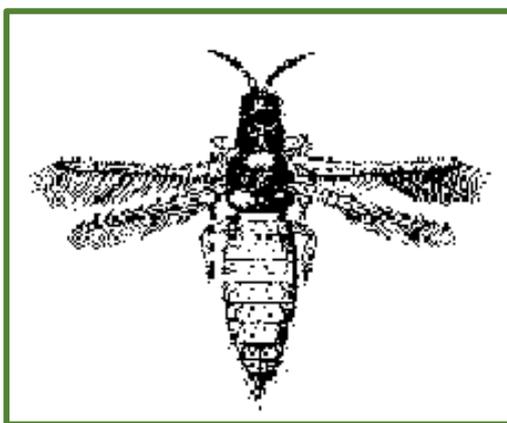
The geographical distribution of Melon thrips continues to expand year by year.

In recent years, melon thrip has spread from Southeast Asia to most of the rest of Asia, to many Pacific Ocean islands, including Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Tonga, North Africa, Central and South America, and the Caribbean

It was detected in the Northern Territory in 1989 around Berrimah and Darwin's rural area, in Queensland in 1993 and in the Ord River Irrigation Area (ORIA) of Western Australia in the north of the State in 2001. It has since been found in various parts of these states indicating that a permanent populations have established. Melon thrip host produce grown or packed in Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia and certain parts of north eastern New South Wales that are within 100km radius of a known infestation of melon thrips must not enter South Australia unless they meet Condition 16 of the [Plant Quarantine Standard \(PQS\)](#)



Adult Melon Thrips  
From: University of Florida



Adult Melon Thrips  
From: NC Extension

#### Description

Adult melon thrips are about 1.5 mm in length and are a yellow-orange colour. The adults have feather-like wings with black hairs along the fringe, which resembles a black line down the body of the thrip. Juveniles (nymphs) are smaller, paler in colour and wingless.

Melon thrips are found most often on the underside of leaves, in flowers and on fruit.

### Symptoms and damage

Melon thrips, like most species of plant feeding thrips, have piercing and rasping mouthparts. The mouthparts are thrust deep into the leaf tissue, sucking out cell contents. The surface of the leaf develops a crinkled silvery appearance as a result of damage to cells below the surface.

Lightly-infested plants show silvery feeding scars on the under surface of leaves, especially alongside the mid rib and veins. Heavily-infested plants show silvering and browning of leaves, stunting of young leaves and terminal growth, with fruit scarred and deformed. Developing leaves become distorted in the growing tips. Capsicum and eggplant are often attacked during early growth, just after transplanting.



**Melon thrip damage to eggfruit**  
From: Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Qld.

### Spread

Melon thrip are not easily detectable because of their small size, so quarantine procedures are difficult to manage and this pest quite often slips through the net with increased traffic in plant produce around the world.

Thrips can be spread as hitch-hikers on machinery, clothes and plant material.

Report any thrips infestations that do not respond to commonly used controls, both chemical and biological.

### Call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline

