



April 2021

A pain in the bud

Chilli thrips – a hot topic across Perth

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has been inundated with reports of unfamiliar rose damage from the metropolitan area over the past few weeks.

Department testing has confirmed damage to rose samples were caused by the culprit: **chilli thrips**. Viral threats have been ruled out.

Chilli thrips (*Scirtothrips dorsalis*) are found throughout the world and were first reported in the State's north about 20 years ago.

The recent rainfall and humidity has created conditions that are conducive to chilli thrips, which like to feed on the sugars in new shoots.

Chilli thrips have moved down from the north of the State to the south in recent years and have been very active during the past couple of years in Perth gardens.

Also known as strawberry thrips and tea thrips, chilli thrips feed not just on roses but also on all citrus and their hybrids, as well as a range of fruit and vegetable hosts.

Chilli thrips are tiny and difficult to distinguish from other thrips species with the naked eye. The pest is about two millimetres long, pale or translucent in colour with an elongated body.

Plants infested by chilli thrips have damage similar to that caused by other thrips species, such as wrinkled, curled or distorted leaves with distinctive brown scarring along leaf veins, flower buds and the calyx or outer casing of fruit.

Management/Control

Thrips are difficult to control, however, thrips rarely kill or threaten the survival of trees and shrubs.



Inspect early and often for damage symptoms and take immediate action to minimise the pest's impact. Once damage is seen, it's almost too late to take preventative measures, so act when thrips first arrive.

An option is to encourage new growth by doing a hard prune of infested plants to remove damaged plant material. If feasible, bag the offcuts before binning to prevent the pest from spreading.

Chilli thrips can be managed via a range of products registered to treat other species of thrips, scale or aphids. Multiple applications of treatments, whether organic or not, will probably be required and it may be wise to apply treatments to other nearby host plants to protect them from the pest.

Lots of information and advice on how best to control thrips on ornamental plants is available online, but advice can also be sort from local garden centres. As always, if you notice damage you've never seen before – please report it for screening.

Report suspect pests



MyPestGuide™ Reporter
via app or online
mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au



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