



Hunting for an exotic psyllid

Are you growing tomatoes, potatoes, chillies, capsicums or other solanaceous plants, like tamarillos, in your backyard?

If so, it is important to check for signs of tomato potato psyllid (*Bactericera cockerelli*), an exotic pest plant that has been detected in a commercial crop north of Perth and a number of backyard gardens in Perth.

Tomato potato psyllid is a tiny sap-sucking insect. The psyllid attacks plants, which can significantly impact plant production, impacting not only home gardeners but also our commercial growers in Western Australia.

Adult psyllids resemble small-winged cicadas but are the size of an aphid, about 3mm long. The body is brownish and has white or yellowish marking on the thorax and a broad white band on the abdomen. The wings are transparent and held vertically over the body.

The tomato potato psyllid can carry the bacterium 'Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum' which causes zebra chip disease in potato.

Symptoms

Look for signs of tomato potato psyllid on the underside of plant leaves. Signs include:

- Insects jumping from foliage when disturbed
- Severe wilting of plants caused by a high number of psyllids feeding
- Yellowing of leaf margins and upward curling of the leaves caused by the injection of salivary toxins
- Yellow or orange eggs present on leaf edges, and maybe on all parts of the leaf
- Small, waxy beads that look like sugar that are excreted by the psyllid while feeding
- Stem death similar to other potato and tomato disorders.

Report tomato potato psyllid if you find it

- It is important for the Department of Agriculture and Food to understand the location of these psyllids to help minimise their impact in Western Australia.
- If you suspect tomato potato psyllid in your garden, send a photo to the Department of Agriculture and Food, WA via the [MyPestGuide Reporter](#) app available from the [Google Play](#) or the [App Store](#) or report online at mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au.
- If you checked and found no psyllids, please also send photos of your healthy, psyllid-free leaves via the [MyPestGuide Reporter](#) app, as all reports help build a picture of the current situation.
- Alternatively, email photos with your name, address and contact number to info@agric.wa.gov.au or call the [Pest and Disease Information Service](#) on 1800 084 881.

Backyard biosecurity reminder

Sound biosecurity practices to prevent the entry, establishment and spread of pests, weeds and diseases are vital at all times for backyard gardeners, but particularly if you detect a pest or disease on your property.

- Check the plants you buy and bring onto your property are free of pests.
- Regularly check your plants for unfamiliar pests or diseases.
- Report suspect pests and diseases to the Department of Agriculture and Food.

For current information on tomato potato psyllid in Western Australia, go to agric.wa.gov.au/tpp

Pest and Disease Information Service (PaDIS). info@agric.wa.gov.au. 1800 084 881
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