

Biosecurity Alert: Intonsa flower thrips detected in Queensland

Intonsa flower thrips (*Frankliniella intonsa*) has been detected at several commercial berry properties in the Caboolture region of southeast Queensland.

This is the first time the pest has been reported in Australia.

The initial detection followed reports of unusually high thrips numbers and significant damage to raspberries at Elimbah in April 2026. Further detections were confirmed in blackberry and strawberry crops at Ningi and Wamuran.

Intonsa flower thrips can infest a wide range of plants, including berries, vegetables, ornamentals, field crops and weeds. Feeding and egg-laying can cause:

- scarring
- distorted fruit
- reduced fruit quality
- lower yields

The pest can also transmit plant viruses, including Tomato spotted wilt orthotospovirus and Impatiens necrotic spot orthotospovirus. It may spread through infested plant material or by the natural movement of adult thrips, including wind-assisted dispersal.



Intonsa flower thrip female. Image: Laurence Mound



Intonsa flower thrip male. Image: Okajima & Matsumoto

Response and management

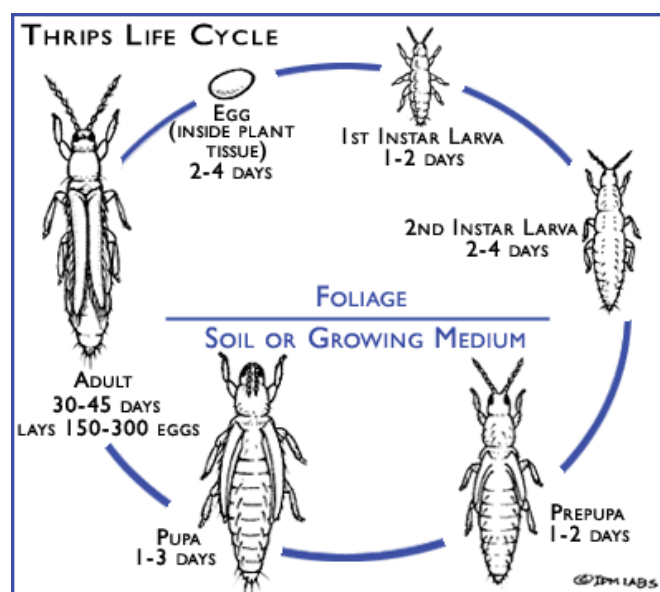
Surveillance, diagnostic testing and technical assessments indicate that the pest is present at several geographically separate commercial properties. No formal eradication response is therefore being implemented, allowing industry to focus on practical management without causing unnecessary regulatory impacts for affected growers.

Do not rely on chemicals alone!

Effective thrips management requires an integrated pest management (IPM) approach. Thrips are very likely to have, or develop, insecticide resistance where management programs rely heavily on chemical control alone.

When managing Intonsa flower thrips, or any thrips species, growers should:

- monitor crops regularly for thrips activity and feeding damage
- use monitoring results to guide management decisions
- incorporate biological controls, including beneficial predators such as Orius (predatory bugs) and Cucumeris (predatory mites) where appropriate
- protect beneficial insects and mites by considering the effects of pesticide applications on biological control agents
- use chemical controls as one component of an IPM program, rather than the sole method of control
- follow product labels and relevant resistance-management strategies such as rotating between a minimum of three chemicals with different modes of action.



Thrips life cycle. Image ar.inspiredpencil.com

Regular crop monitoring, IPM and biological control are imperative when managing any thrips species. Combining biological, cultural and chemical management options provides a more sustainable approach and reduces reliance on insecticides.

Identifying Intonsa flower thrips

Intonsa flower thrips can be very difficult to distinguish from Western flower thrips (WFT) and their colour can vary depending on diet and environmental conditions. Because the two species look so similar, professional diagnostic identification through Grow Help Australia or another qualified entomology service is essential when unusual or high thrips populations are detected.

Some features that may be observed include:



- Adult females are generally larger and darker, while males are smaller and brown, but both can look very similar to WFT.
- Larvae are typically bright yellow to orange and are also similar in size to WFT larvae.
- Pre-pupal stages may be found beneath the fruit calyx.

Do not rely on visual identification alone. If thrips numbers or crop damage are unusually high or occur at an unexpected time of year, collect samples and seek professional identification. Correct identification is important for understanding the pest present and selecting an appropriate IPM program.

Intonsa flower thrips can reproduce and develop rapidly under favourable conditions, particularly in warm, humid environments, so regular crop monitoring and early investigation of unusual thrips activity are important.

Report unusual pest activity

Continue monitoring crops for unusual thrips activity or unexplained crop damage. Report unusual pests or diseases to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881. The hotline operates in all Australian states and territories.

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