

# COMMON GREENHOUSE PESTS

## - THRIPS -



Adult thrips.

Thrips (order Thysanoptera) are one of the most widespread, economically damaging and difficult pests to control worldwide. They are one of the smallest known winged insects. They are named after their fringed/eyelash like wings. They cause damage to plants by piercing the cells of surface tissues and feeding on the sap. This causes the cells to die leaving unsightly sunken white blotches on leaf surfaces. Leaves may also be deformed and blossoms damaged by feeding in flower buds or on new vegetative growth. Thrips also transmit deadly viruses like Impatiens Necrotic Spot Virus (INSV) and Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus (TSWV) that can devastate numerous crop varieties.

### Life Cycle

Thrips develop through a series of 6 stages in 2 - 3.5 weeks at 68-85 degrees Fahrenheit. They insert their eggs in plant leaves, blossoms and soft tissues on stems. After the egg hatches, the thrips larva feed on the leaf. They are commonly found on the undersides of leaves, in flowers or in plant crevices. They go through two mobile larval stages then move to plant crevices or drop into the soil to pupate. They undergo two pupal stages where they do not feed and are fairly non-mobile. The adult phase is the only stage that can be used to identify the species.

### Identification

Adult thrips (0.04 in long) have fringed wings and vary in color from pale yellow to brown. All stages closely resemble the adult in appearance. The larvae are wingless. The pupal stages are recognizable by their developing wing pads. The adult is the only stage with fully developed wings.



Life stages of thrips.