



## Thrips

### What is a Thrip?

Thrips are members of the order Thysanoptera. There are over 4500 species with several known to invade greenhouses and interiors — especially greenhouses with floral crops. A thrips (yes, thrips, with an “s” is the singular and plural versions of this pest’s name) is not only known for the direct plant damage it causes, but also for the serious plant diseases it carries.

Thrips are very small & very mobile - will crawl, jump, walk and fly to any target.

Their light bodies and wing structure enable them to ride wind currents great distances allowing them to find new food and nest locations.

Though plants are generally where they want to be nesting, water and high moisture seem to be more important.



### What do Thrips do?

These insects suck plant juices with their needle-sharp mouthparts, causing a great deal of damage to plants. They feed on both leaves and flowers. Larvae are on the surface of the soil. Thrips damage is worst in hot, dry conditions. Obvious signs of thrips infestation are silvery streaked areas on leaves and dark spots on flowers.

They occasionally or seasonally invade homes and can enter via the gaps in the flywire screens. They are attracted to white objects. Cloth nappies (the old days!) on the clothes line or white sheets, jumpers or shirts get covered with thrips. Again it is usually on a very hot dry day that vast numbers appear. Commonly seen in Melbourne around spring time when conditions start to warm up.

### Do Thrips Bite?

During hot periods people in close proximity will become targets as hungry thrips turn to anything in their way which provide potential food source. These bites can hurt as they try to penetrate your skin with their proboscis. Do not worry their mouth parts are not designed to penetrate skin – only softer plant tissue.



May also cause a rash. It is also believed some stages will readily target people as they hatch. This is very common in landscaped garden areas which have high moisture content. Heavily irrigated lawns, flower beds and gardens are prime targets for pupating thrips and when they hatch, they are hungry.

If people are present, they will become targets. Since thrips are small, it is not uncommon for them to go unseen and many times misidentified as either a mosquito or some type of biting fly.

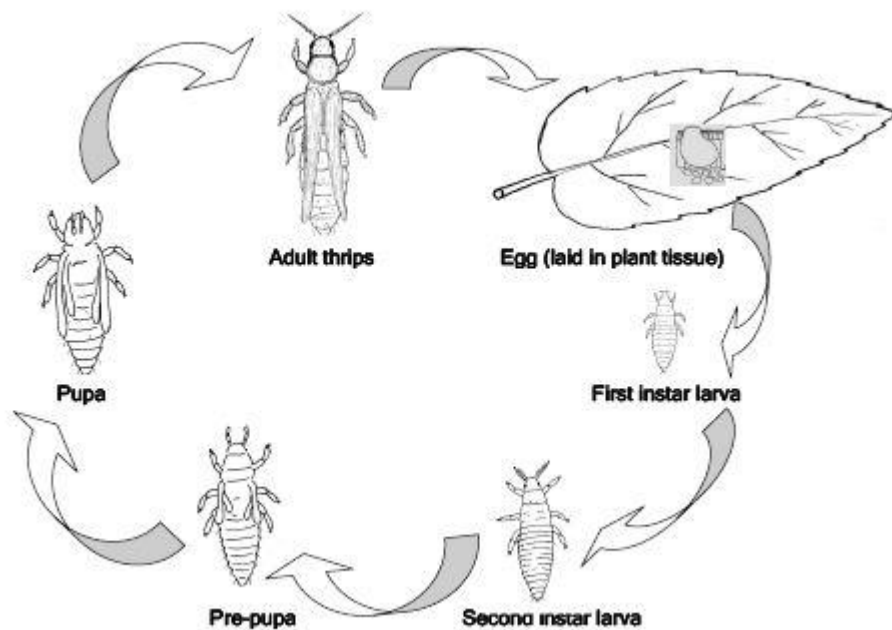
The fast flying Thrips is the common culprit and since they can pass through just about any window screen flywire, they will readily find their way into homes. Once in the home, people and pets will become targets for food; pot plants will become the prime location for egg laying and reproduction.

If you've been targeted by thrips and find their bites to be itchy, creams can be purchased from the chemist to assist with bites and can be applied to the skin for itch relief

### How do Exopest treat them?

Exopest generally do not treat for this seasonal pest. You may like to vacuum or use an aerosol insect spray as fast knock down on those that have entered your home. On some occasions if vast numbers we may be able to do a misting using pyrethrum but this will require you to vacate the premises for 2-4hrs and is only a knockdown which will not prevent further infestation.

Exopest may also need to treat foliage around the immediate area including mulch, tan bark and lawn areas to knock down some of the breeding areas



This whole process from egg to adult can happen in as little as two weeks depending on the species and the local environment. For this reason it is important to realize just how quickly a few can turn into a few thousand.