

Avocado thrips

What is Avocado thrips?

Avocado thrips (*Scirtothrips perseae*) is the major thrips pest of avocados in California, where it causes large economic losses.

What does it look like?

Adults are small (approximately 1 mm long), straw yellow in colour, and have thin dark lines running across the upper surface of the abdomen. The wings are brown in colour when folded over the abdomen. Immature pale yellow thrips develop through two larval stages. The eggs are kidney-shaped and whitish yellow in colour.

What can it be confused with?

Scirtothrips perseae is similar in colour to the Californian species *S. aceri*. However, this species is also exotic to Australia so any thrips fitting the above description should be sent to an entomologist for proper identification. *S. perseae* is also different from most thrips in that adult and immature stages are readily observed on upper leaf surfaces.

What should I look for?

Observation of adult or larval stages of the thrips can be seen on leaves. Symptoms of leaf damage appear along leaf veins, and as the population increases bronzing is observed in random patterns between leaf veins. Severe infestation can also cause leaf drop.

Damage to the fruit shows up as brown surface scarring which, when severe enough, covers the entire fruit surface resulting in the characteristic 'alligator skin' appearance. When Avocado thrips damage young fruit, elongate scarring results as the fruit continue to grow.



Brown surface scarring can cover the entire fruit surface

Mark S. Hoddle, University of California



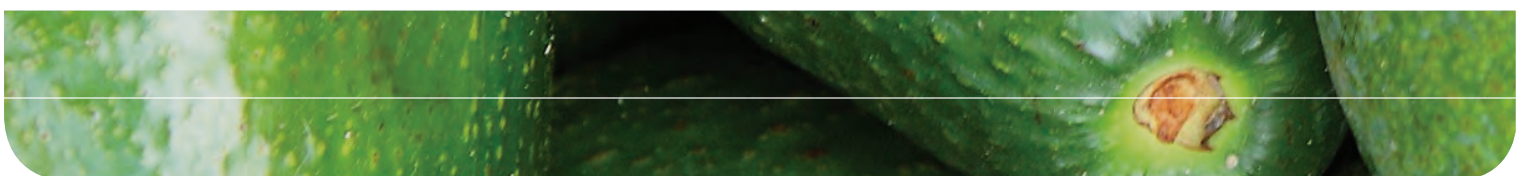
Adults are straw coloured with thin dark lines across the abdomen. The wings appear dark brown when folded

Jack Kelly Clark, UC Statewide IPM Program



Initial scars on young fruit can continue to grow with the fruit

Jack Kelly Clark, UC Statewide IPM Program





How does it spread?

Over short distances, thrips are poor flyers, but they can be transported by winds. Over long distances, spread is likely to be the result of movement of infested avocado plants.

Where is it now?

S. perseae is found in Mexico and Guatemala, and was recently introduced into California.

How can I protect my orchard from Avocado thrips?

Source plant material only from clean, accredited suppliers, and preferably material that is certified. Check your orchard frequently for the presence of new pests and unusual symptoms. Make sure you are familiar with common avocado insect pests so you can tell if you see something different.

If you see anything unusual, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline

**EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881**



Characteristic 'Alligator skin' from thrips damage

David Rosen, University of California Statewide IPM Project



Bronzing may be observed in random patterns between leaf veins

Mark S. Hoddle, University of California

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