PestFacts WA

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Cabbage centre grub on canola seedling with webbing visible on stem. Photo courtesy of Cameron Smith (Bumper Consulting).

Cameron Smith (Bumper Consulting) has found cabbage centre grub (caterpillars) damaging moisture-stressed canola, at the 2-4 leaf stage, north of Koorda and east of Wongan Hills.

Jess Cole (Independent Rural Perenjori) has also found cabbage centre grub chewing moisture-stressed, early sown canola, at the 4-6 leaf stage, at Latham.

This moth pest can build up in weeds and volunteer crops and caterpillars were recently found on regrowth canola at Wongan Hills that wasn't sprayed out prior to seeding.

Cabbage centre grub feed on the stems and leaves of canola seedlings and other brassicas and produce distinctive webbing between leaf tissue. Caterpillars of the weed web moth are similar in appearance and also produce webbing. In warmer than average years, high populations of both pests can build up and cause economic damage to canola crops.

For more information on cabbage centre grub, weed web moth and other caterpillar pests putting emerging crops at risk see DPIRD's 2025 PestFacts WA Issue 3 article Warm weather is favouring caterpillars.

Managing cabbage centre grub

Growers are advised to monitor their paddocks for caterpillar activity and only spray if caterpillars are present, actively feeding on the crop, and the crop is unable to outgrow the feeding damage. Under good growing conditions crops are likely to outgrow damage.

For insecticide information growers and consultants can refer to DPIRD's 2025 autumn winter insecticide guide . Insecticides are registered for most caterpillar pests. Cabbage centre grubs may be referred to as centre grub on product labels.

Cabbage centre grubs can be difficult to control using contact insecticides as they produce webbing between leaves that creates a protective layer.

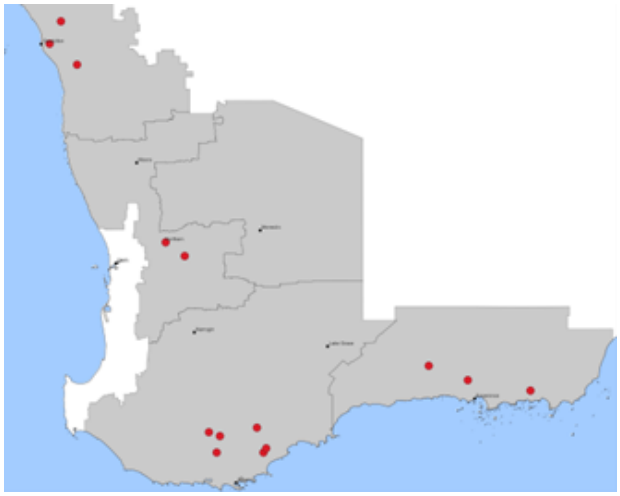
Growers should consider insecticide options that are soft on predator insects if spraying. For details on insecticide toxicity to beneficial insects, refer to Cesar Australia's Beneficials Chemical Toxicity Table.

Further Information

For more information contact Research Scientists Svetlana Micic in Albany on +61 8 9892 8591 and Andrew Phillips in Geraldton on +61 8 9956 8567.

Article author: Bec Severtson (DPIRD Northam).

No green peach aphid detected yet in DPIRD monitoring



Green peach aphid/turnip yellows virus monitoring sites (red dots) in 2025. Map courtesy of DPIRD.

This season, the Department of Primary Industries and Development's (DPIRD) virology team is continuing to monitor green peach aphid (GPA) populations using yellow sticky traps and inspecting canola crops at the locations shown on the map above. All aphids caught will be tested for turnip yellows virus (TuYV), which can cause seed yield losses of up to 50% in canola. TuYV is transmitted by GPA.

Winged and non-winged green peach aphids. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Trapping began in early April 2025 and will continue until August.

As of 14 May 2025, GPA has not been detected at any of the monitoring sites. The crops being monitored currently range in growth stage from pre-emergent to 7 leaf stage. Nevertheless, GPA are expected to arrive in canola crops soon, especially in regions with established non-crop refuges such as wild radish and volunteer canola, as well as some established canola crops.

This surveillance is being undertaken as part of GRDC project DAW2305-003RTX, 'Effective virus management in grain crops'. Findings from this surveillance will be regularly shared through the PestFacts WA newsletter.

If you find aphids in your canola crops, please use the PestFacts WA Reporter app to make a report.

Further information

For more information on canola aphids refer to the Grains Research and Development Corporation's (GRDC) Crop aphids – the back pocket guide.

For more information about managing GPA, refer to the 2025 PestFacts WA Issue 1 article Enhancing aphid and virus control in canola: beyond seed treatments and GRDC's Green peach aphid – best practice management guide.

For more information about TuYV, refer to the department's Turnip yellows virus and its management in canola factsheet.

For further information contact Research Scientist Benjamin Congdon in Perth via email at Benjamin.Congdon@dpird.wa.gov.au.

Article authors: Ben Congdon (DPIRD Perth) and Cindy Webster (DPIRD Narrogin).

Bryobia mite and redlegged earth mites are damaging moisture stressed crops

Mild, warm weather conditions have contributed to increased bryobia (clover) mite activity, with damage reported in moisture stressed crops from Wongan Hills to Esperance.

Redlegged earth mite (RLEM) damage continues to be reported in seedling canola crops and pastures along the south coast, following widespread hatching in late April and early May. Cooler temperatures will lead to further hatchings of earth mites, including blue oat mite and RLEM.

There have been no reports of crop damage from lucerne flea or balaustium mite, although lucerne flea hatching was reported near Esperance at the end of April. As winter approaches, balaustium mites and lucerne flea are expected to be present in paddocks.

Bryobia mite

- Wongan Hills
- Cunderdin
- Beverley
- Perillup
- Nalyerlup
- North Cascade
- Grass Patch
- Beaumont

Adult bryobia mite. Photo courtesy of Andrew Weeks (Cesar Australia).

Bryobia mite damage to emerging canola crops has been reported from Wongan Hills, Beverley, Perillup, Nalyerlup, North Cascade, Grass Patch and Beaumont. In some cases, canola was outgrowing the damage. Minor bryobia mite damage to lupin seedlings was reported at Cunderdin, and the lupins appeared to be outgrowing damage.

Bryobia mites are most damaging when emerging crops are moisture stressed, and temperatures are above 20ºC. Look for stippling feeding damage, and dark brown mites with prominent forelegs, on the upper surface of leaves. Growers are recommended to

consider control only if crops are unable to out-grow feeding damage. Cold and wet weather are not favourable to bryobia mites.

Redlegged earth mites

- Munglinup
- Merivale
- Howick

Redlegged earth mites. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

RLEM have been reported damaging canola at several locations east of Esperance, including Munglinup, Merivale and Howick, and have also been found on ryegrass and volunteer canola in this region.

Growers are urged to monitor for RLEM activity in their paddocks and be wary of insecticide resistant populations. Many crops would have received a bare earth insecticide spray many weeks ago, and germinating seedlings will be unprotected from mites hatching from over-summering eggs.

For details on predicted RLEM hatch dates and management of RLEM see DPIRD's 2025 PestFacts WA Issue 4 article Redlegged earth mites are hatching.

Identification and management of mites

Correct identification of mites is critical for effective control, as different species can vary in their susceptibility to certain insecticide groups, either naturally or through insecticide resistance. Applying the wrong chemicals to control a pest may be ineffective and damage to crops could continue. This can lead to a reduction in seedling density or re-sowing some paddocks.

Bryobia mites and balaustium mites are more likely to be seen feeding on plants during warm and sunny parts of the day whilst RLEM and blue oat mites will be more noticeable feeding on leaves on overcast cool days or early morning / late afternoon.

For more information on identification of mites refer to GRDC's Redlegged earth mite best practice management guide and Crop Mites Back Pocket Guide.

You can request or confirm identification of mites by using the PestFacts WA Reporter app. Your reports will also contribute to the interactive PestFacts WA service which issue warnings of pest outbreaks.

To find registered insecticide recommendations for mites, refer to DPIRD's 2025 autumn winter insecticide guide.

Further information

For more mite information contact Research Scientist Svetlana Micic, Albany on +61 8 9892 8591.

Article author: Bec Severtson (DPIRD Northam)

Downy mildew in canola

- Williams
- Gibson

Downy mildew on the underside of a canola leaf. Photo courtesy of Hilary Wittwer (Farmworks).

Hilary Wittwer (Farmworks) has reported finding downy mildew in canola seedlings near Williams. The affected plants had 6 true leaves and were of the HyTTec Trophy variety. The infection was scattered throughout the crop. It was a surprising find, as it has been so dry recently in that area.

Downy mildew as seen from the top of a canola leaf. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Plant pathologist Andrea Hills (DPIRD) has also found traces of downy mildew on the lower leaves of canola in a DPIRD trial near Gibson. The plants were at the 6 true leaves growth stage.

Canola downy mildew in WA mainly affects young cotyledons and the first few true leaves.

Symptoms of downy mildew typically appear as yellowed cotyledons and lower leaves. Older leaves display angular lesions on the upper leaf surface that have a yellow-orange halo. Sometimes the lesions appear as creamish, circular to irregular spots of varying sizes on the upper leaf surface that turn brownish over time.

Examination of the underside of these leaves often shows a corresponding patch of white fluffy growth, although this can become less apparent with age or turn beige in colour, or have sand adhering to it. Severely affected cotyledons shrivel up and senesce prematurely.

While some early seedling mortality may occur, canola plants usually overcome the disease as they get older and as conditions cool.

Disease is generally favoured by temperatures of 15-18°C and wet soil coupled with high humidity. Under such conditions, disease spreads very rapidly.

Downy mildew in WA is mainly soil borne but may be seed borne or carried over on the green bridge. Once primary lesions are formed on the underside of the leaves, secondary spread of the disease occurs via airborne spores formed in the primary lesions. Disease epidemics are sporadic, therefore developing control strategies against downy mildew can be very challenging.

Most of the current canola varieties are susceptible to downy mildew, although some varieties are affected less than others. Canola varieties are not screened for their resistance to this disease.

Seed dressings with the active ingredient metalaxyl-m can help suppress downy mildew in seedlings.

For more information on canola diseases contact Research Scientists Andrea Hills, Esperance on +61 (0)8 9083 1144, Ciara Beard, Geraldton on +61 (0)8 9956 8504 or Jean Galloway, Northam on +61 (0)8 9690 2172.

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