

CITRUS PEST SPOTLIGHT

Greenhouse thrips

By Michael E. Rogers

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Heliethrips haemorrhoidalis (Bouché)
(Thysanoptera: Thripidae)

IDENTIFICATION

Greenhouse thrips are small in size, measuring about 1 mm in length when mature. Adult females have a black head and thorax with brown abdomen and yellow legs (Fig. 1). Males are typically not seen, since this species often reproduces by parthenogenesis, which is without mating. The larvae are white in color with red eyes. Greenhouse thrips are usually found in close proximity to the black fecal droplets they produce. These fecal droplets are believed to deter predators.

DAMAGE

Greenhouse thrips are usually found feeding in protected areas such as beneath the fruit calyx, where two fruit are touching or where a branch is in direct contact with fruit. In Florida, red grapefruit is most affected by greenhouse thrips but white grapefruit varieties may also be damaged. Damage

appears as scarring or rind blemish that affects the appearance of these fresh fruit varieties (Fig. 2).

MANAGEMENT

In groves with a history of rind blemish, scouting for greenhouse thrips should begin when clusters of young fruit are just beginning to touch. A hand lens is necessary to observe the thrips on the fruit. However, because the thrips move quickly to hide when the fruit is disturbed, alcohol washes may be useful in obtaining accurate estimates of thrips abundance. Using a bucket containing one pint of 80 percent alcohol, fruit from clusters can be rinsed to remove the thrips and the fruit then discarded. Four fruit should be sampled from each of five trees. The alcohol rinse can then be poured into a dish and examined at the truck or in the office using a field microscope. The presence of 20 or more thrips adults or larvae signals an insecticide application is needed. If five or more thrips are found, routine weekly monitoring should continue. For more information on control of greenhouse thrips, including recommended pesticides, please refer to the Florida Citrus Pest Management Guide.

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Fig. 1. Adult and larval stage greenhouse thrips along with black fecal droplets on the surface of red grapefruit



Fig. 2. Rind blemish damage on the surface of red grapefruit caused by the feeding of greenhouse thrips. Feeding damage occurred in protected areas where clustered fruit were touching.

CITRUS WEED SPOTLIGHT

Lamb's-Quarters, *Chenopodium album*

By Stephen H. Futch
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Season: herbaceous annual

Plant height: up to 5 feet tall or more

Leaves: alternate, simple, variable in shape and size; blades are ovate to lanceolate and may appear 3-lobed, fleshy, whitish

Stem: branched, angular or ridged, green or purplish vertical ridges; entire plant covered with mealy powder

Flowers: tiny, without petals, gray to green in color, arranged in spikelike clusters in the leaf axils at the ends of the branches and stems

Root: deep taproot

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Seeds: 1/16 inch in diameter, disc-shaped, glossy black, brown or brownish green in color

Distribution: found throughout most of the temperate and subtropical world in disturbed sites, including fields, yards and vacant areas.

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