Thrips Identification Guide

How to Identify Thrips in the United States

By DoMyOwn staff

OVERVIEW

Thrips Found in the United States



Thrips are sucking insects that can damage leaves, flowers, and fruit surfaces on many plants. Thrips pierce the outer layer of plant skin and feed on the juices within. The signs of this type of feeding may include dark spots or flecks and white feeding scars on the plant skin.

SIZE



The maximum size of an adult thrips compared with a US penny

Adult thrips are slender and tiny, at 1/50- to 1/25-inches long. Adult thrips can be seen above compared to a U.S. penny for a size comparison.

The nymphs look like even smaller adults, with some differences in coloration.

SHAPE

Thrips appear to be tiny dark slivers on your plants. They have elongated bodies, and their long, narrow wings have a fringe pattern along their edges.

COLOR



There are many types of thrips in different colors. Thrips change in color between larval and adult stages, and thrips larvae tend to be light green or yellow rather than the darker colors many adult thrips display. Their eyes are sometimes visibly red.

Some of the most common colorations for adult thrips include:

- Translucent yellow or whitish colors
- Dark brown or black
- Less common varieties may be bright colors such as red-orange

RANGE

There are several thousand varieties of thrips in the world, and hundreds of varieties can be found across the United States. Some are most commonly found in the Southeastern states, but others may be found from coast to coast, appearing wherever their preferred plant food source is readily available.