

### **Threat of THRIPS Infestation**

Thrips, especially the western flower thrips, or WFT (*Frankliniella occidentalis*) are the main insect pests in many greenhouses and nurseries. WFT feeding injury on leaves and flowers of numerous host plants, as well as virus transmission (including impatiens necrotic spot virus [INSV] and tomato spotted wilt virus [TSWV]) make these insects very serious problems. They can be extremely difficult to control once an infestation becomes well-established.

Recently another thrips, the chilli thrips (*Scirtothrips dorsalis*) has been detected in Florida and other states. This thrips feeds on numerous ornamental and vegetable plants in greenhouses and outdoors. Chilli thrips feed mostly on leaves, buds and fruits, but unlike the WFT, do not feed on pollen. Plant injury can be severe. Virus transmission is also a possibility, but this has not yet been confirmed.

### **THRIP Management**

The most important aspect of thrips management is to have a scouting and monitoring program. By using such a program you will be able to keep track of population trends. This will help you

decide not only how often to apply pesticides but which pesticide or tank mix to use. Some of the pesticides and tank mixes are best used when thrips numbers are low, are found only on leaves and not in flowers. Others can be used in a so-called “rescue” program. A monitoring program should include sticky traps, indicator plants and plant inspections.

As with controlling any other insect or mite pest problem, results will be better if thrips numbers are low to begin with. Help your pesticide program out by promptly removing unsold plants from the greenhouse after harvest. Keep weeds to a minimum inside and around the outside of the greenhouse. Try screening vents and doors to help exclude thrips. When crops are produced on benches, releases of predatory mites in the Genus *Hypoaspis* below the benches have helped reduce thrips numbers. The mites feed on thrips transformation stages that drop off plants onto the soil. Some growers introduce other predatory mites in the Genus *Amblyseius* that will feed on thrips on plants. If this is done, pesticides must be selected and used carefully to avoid harming the predatory mites. Your goal should be to prevent thrips numbers from building to damaging levels rather than trying to control a heavy infestation.

## Prescription Solutions that can be used to manage western flower thrips and chilli thrips.

Application	Product(s)	Chemical Class	MOA Group	Residual	REI
1	Marathon® II (1.7 oz/100 gal) or 60 WP (1 packet/100 gal) or Discus™** (25 oz/100 gal)	Neonicotinoid (Discus also contains a pyrethroid)	4A (3)	10-28 days	12
2	Pylon®* (5.2-10 oz/100 gal)	Pyrrole	13	7-14 days	12
3	Pylon®* (5.2-10 oz/100 gal)	Pyrrole	13	7-14 days	12
4	Conserve® (6-22 oz/100 gal) + Pedestal™ (6-8 oz/100 gal)	Spinosyn + Benzoyl urea IGR	5+15	10-14 days	12
5	Conserve® (6-22 oz/100 gal)	Spinosyn	5	10 days	4
6	Avid® (8 oz/100 gallons) + Azatin®XL (12 oz/100 gallons)	Glycoside + Biopestocode IGR	6+18	10-14 days	12
7	Avid® (8 oz/100 gallons) + Azatin®XL (12 oz/100 gallons)	Glycoside + Biopestocode IGR	6+18	10-14 days	12

\* Pylon is registered in greenhouses only.

\*\* Discus is registered in commercial nurseries only.