

Tomato Potato Psyllid Project

Trapping in the home garden

Factsheet



Volunteer your garden to support insect research

Do you live in the Darwin or Palmerston area and have space to care for a tomato plant? We need your help!

We are carrying out research on tomato potato psyllid (TPP) and searching for 100 volunteer citizen scientists to set up insect traps in their gardens or on their balconies. We will provide everything you need, including a free tomato plant.

The pest

TPP is one of the world's most destructive horticultural pests. It is a tiny sap-sucking insect that feeds mainly on tomatoes, potatoes, chillies, capsicums and eggplants.

The adults look similar to cicadas, but are only a fraction of the size, growing to about 3mm in length.

Not only does TPP damage plants and crops by feeding on them, it can also carry a bacterium that causes serious plant diseases.

TPP has not been detected in the Northern Territory (NT) or other eastern states, but it is an established pest in Western Australia (WA).

Adopt-a-trap program

This nation-wide project is being led by the WA Government to improve early detection of TPP in each state and territory.

This targeted surveillance also helps to support NT fruit and vegetable growers by providing confidence that their produce is free of the pest.

An incursion of TPP is likely to enter through a major port or produce market and establish in an urban area before spreading to regional areas. That's why we're focusing on home and community gardens in Darwin and Palmerston.

By participating in this research, you will contribute data to a valuable national project. And of course receive a free plant.

How it works?

In June, you'll need to collect your free tomato plant and 'adopt a trap' kit from Berrimah Farm (if you can't pick it up, we'll organise delivery). The kit will include sticky insect traps, pre-paid envelopes and instructions to help you set up the trap in your tomato plant at home.

The program runs for 4 weeks. At the end of each trapping week, fill in a submission form, put the form and the used trap in the self-addressed envelope and put it in a post box.

Our team of entomologists at Berrimah Farm will then get to work identifying any insects stuck to the traps.

If you have the space, you can adopt more than 1 trap. We'll supply you with more tomato plants.

There are two trapping periods in the year and we'll be looking for volunteers to help us again in September. If you are available for both of these, let us know.

If you don't have a garden?

You don't need to have a garden to be involved. A sunny spot outside, such as a balcony, where you can keep and care for a pot plant is all you need.

We are also inviting schools, community gardens and nurseries to participate.

Register

To register for the adopt-a-trap program, please complete the online form at industry.nt.gov.au/tpp-trapping

For further information, please contact David Hamilton, Plant Biosecurity Officer
E: plantbiosecurity@nt.gov.au | T: 8999 2203

Get your
community
garden
or school
involved!

