

**Description:** Thrips are tiny (less than  $\frac{1}{20}$  inch long), slender, yellowish or blackish insects common to many farm, garden, and greenhouse crops. They may be carried over long distances by wind. Adults can be identified by the long fringes on the margins of their wings. Larvae are small, translucent white to yellowish, and wingless. Western flower thrips are common in Nevada on crops and ornamentals.

**Damage:** Larvae and adults suck plant sap from buds, flowers, and leaves, resulting in distorted or discolored flowers and silvery, stippled leaves. Damage is not noticeable right after feeding. In heavy infestations, the plant parts or the entire plant dries and withers away. Black spots on leaves, which are actually feces, are a sign of thrips activity. Thrips spread incurable viruses to healthy plants they feed on.

**Management:** Thrips are hard to control because a large portion of their life cycle is protected by soil or plant parts. Chemical control is difficult and not recommended. Insecticidal soaps will reduce populations, but effects are only temporary. Plants may outgrow the damage if they are well irrigated.



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Adult thrips keep their wings folded over their backs (left).

Larvae and adults suck plant sap resulting in dry, silvery, stippled leaves (right).



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