

# Melon thrips (*Thrips palmi* Karny)

The melon thrips (*Thrips palmi* Karny) is a miniscule yellow insect difficult to see with the naked eye since it measures from 1.1 to 1.5 mm. It affects more than 50 vegetable species and carries the tomato spotted wilt virus. It is capable of reproducing many generations per year and takes from 14 to 17 days to develop.

Due to its very small size, this pest disperses over long distances through climate factors such as winds and hurricanes; moreover, the increase of its population is dependent on high temperatures and scarce rains.

The thrips palmi Karny causes damages to vegetable crops and harms their leaves, flowers and fruits. The typical symptoms of the pest when its population is high are the bronzed or silvered appearance of the plants and scarred and deformed fruits.

The melon thrips originated in Sumatra, Indonesia, where it was first classified in 1925. Its presence was confirmed in Mexico in March, 2004 in a watermelon crop in the municipality of Campeche, Campeche, from where it spread to Yucatán and Quintana Roo.

Currently, the National Service for Agro-Alimentary Public Health, Safety and Quality (SENASICA) operates the campaign against the melon thrips in Campeche, Chiapas, Oaxaca,

Puebla, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Veracruz and Yucatán, where phytosanitary actions are taking place to combat the pest.