

Pest Alert

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Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry
Charles H. Bronson, Commissioner of Agriculture

***Holopothrips* sp., an introduced thrips pest of the trumpet tree**

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An unusual phlaeothripid has been discovered infesting *Tabebuia aurea*, *T. heterophylla*, and *T. pallida* at multiple sites in Dade County. This species was first identified by Steve Nakahara, USDA-SEL, in December 2001. It clearly is an introduced species, and appears to be closely related to *Holopothrips inquilinus* (Bournier) described from Guadeloupe in the Lesser Antilles.

Adult thrips of both sexes are similar in appearance. They are about 1.5-2.2 mm in body length. The overall color is light brown, not dark brown all over like many phlaeothripids. The antennae are pale with brown tips, the legs are brown with pale tarsi on all legs, and pale tibiae on the first legs. The thoracic segments are suffused with light orange peripherally. Prominent pale intersegmental membranes give the abdomen a banded appearance. The compound eyes are red. Mounted specimens are mostly orange-yellow, with the tubular posterior of the abdomen and last few preceding abdominal segments dark brown. Larvae are pale yellow and have all features poorly developed compared to adults.

The thrips appear to be found on the underside of leaves. Damage typically first appears as large dimples in the leaf between each main side vein, accompanied by spot chlorosis and cell necrosis. Further damage causes the edges of the leaves to curl centrally toward the midline. In advanced cases, the edges of each leaflet may overlap or completely curl inward to enclose the gall-like dimpled areas, which also encloses the thrips and provides protection for them. Each affected leaflet will ultimately be reduced to a narrow, distorted structure which severely reduces the area available for photosynthesis. Not all leaflets in a cluster may be affected, or all the leaflets may not be affected at the same time. In addition to the actual damage to the trees, the distorted leaves impair the visual ornamental value of the trees. Long term effects are not yet known.



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Adam H. Putnam, Commissioner



Larval *Holopothrips* sp.



Adult *Holopothrips* sp.



Leaflets of *Tabebuia* sp. at various stages of damage.



Leaflets of *Tabebuia* sp. comparing beginning damage with severe damage.