



PestFacts WA

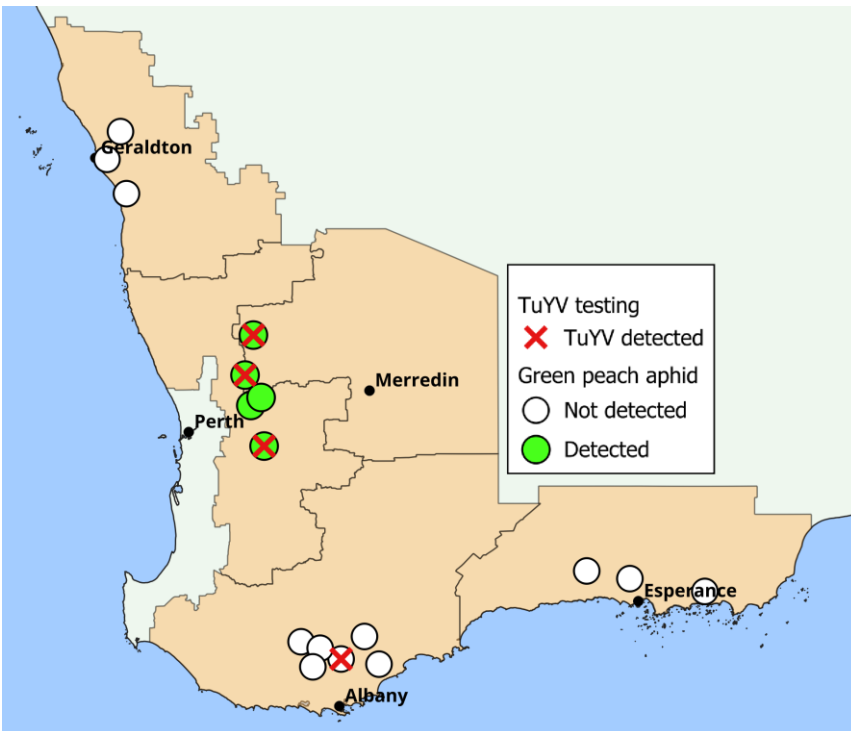
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Green peach aphids and turnip yellows virus detected in canola crops

- Wongan Hills
- Bolgart
- Northam
- Avondale
- Southern Brook
- Howick



Findings from green peach aphid and turnip yellows virus monitoring sites, current to 4 June 2026. Map courtesy of DPIRD.

Plant virology staff from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) have been monitoring green peach aphid (GPA) populations across the WA grainbelt. Surveillance includes the use of yellow sticky traps and targeted inspections of canola crops. All aphids found are being tested for turnip yellows virus (TuYV), which is transmitted by GPA. The map above shows TuYV and GPA detections recorded up to 4 June 2026. There have been GPA and TuYV detections in the Kwinana port zones, and TuYV has also been detected in the Albany port zone.

The PestFacts WA team is also receiving reports of canola aphid activity.

Recent detections

Technical Officer Danae Warden (DPIRD) recently found GPA in canola crops near Wongan Hills (10% infestation) and Bolgart (5% infestation). These GPA tested positive for TuYV, suggesting a risk of escalating TuYV infection over the next few weeks, especially if mild daily maximum temperatures persist.

Earlier this season, GPA was detected on wild radish at Northam, followed by detections at Avondale two weeks later. TuYV was also detected in aphids caught at Avondale.



A green peach aphid on the underside of a canola leaf. Photo courtesy of Norton Staer (Elders).

Norton Staer (Elders) recently reported GPA on volunteer canola in a lupin crop near Southern Brook.



A turnip aphid on the underside of a canola leaf. Photo courtesy of Quenten Knight Agronomy Focus.

Quenten Knight (Agronomy Focus) also recently observed turnip aphids in canola near Howick, with 75% of plants of plants having low level infestations on the underside of leaves.

DPIRD staff will continue monitoring for aphid activity and TuYV using yellow sticky traps and routine inspections of canola paddocks in the Geraldton, Kwinana West, Albany and Esperance regions until August 2026. This surveillance is co-funded by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) project DAW2305-003RTX, "Effective

virus management in grains crops". Findings from this surveillance will be regularly shared through the PestFacts WA newsletter.

Monitoring recommendations

Growers in the Kwinana West port zone, where GPA and TuYV have been detected, are encouraged to monitor canola crops, including those sown with neonicotinoid treated seed, for GPA using the guidelines outlined in the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) [Manage turnip yellows virus in canola factsheet](#).

The risk of losses from TuYV infection in canola is highest when TuYV-carrying GPA are present during the early phase of crop development (emergence to 7-leaf stage). Regular monitoring during this phase is advised.

At least 20 plants should be pulled and closely inspected for GPA along a transect from the crop boundary to 50 m into the crop, as TuYV can be transmitted by just one or two aphids and GPA can be difficult to spot at low numbers.

TuYV may cause foliar symptoms including leaf reddening or purpling beginning on the edges of lower leaves, and plant stunting, however, these symptoms will only appear weeks or months after transmission occurs, meaning they can't be used to proactively monitor infection. Furthermore, under some conditions, TuYV may not produce obvious foliar symptoms yet still cause significant yield loss. Therefore, the most reliable way to confirm the presence of TuYV is through laboratory testing.

The optimal temperature range for GPA population growth is 20-25°C, so cool winter conditions may slow GPA infestation rates in some areas.

For more information on identifying GPA and TuYV symptoms, refer to the 2026 PestFacts WA Issue 5 article [Check canola crops for green peach aphids to assess virus risk](#).

If GPA are found in canola, growers can contact [PestFactsWA](#) or Senior Research Scientist [Benjamin Congdon](#) to arrange TuYV testing and discuss management options.

Management

The only management strategy available after sowing for TuYV is the use of registered foliar insecticides, which must be applied in the early stages of GPA infestation (i.e. when less than 30% of plants are infested with infective aphids) to be most effective. Once widespread infestation of infective GPA and subsequent TuYV infection occurs, foliar insecticides will not provide any economic benefit in reducing TuYV inflicted yield losses.

Only three active ingredients registered for GPA in canola are considered effective for virus suppression due to the species' widespread insecticide resistance: afidopyropen (Versys), flonicamid (Mainman or Aria) and sulfoxaflor (Transform).

For more information on GPA insecticide resistance, refer to GRDC's [Green peach aphid – best practice management guide](#) and [Aphid and insecticide resistance management in grain crops](#).

Paraffinic oils are unlikely to provide sufficiently robust control to prevent the spread of TuYV infection.

For more information on TuYV management, refer to GRDC's [Manage turnip yellows virus in canola factsheet](#)

For registered insecticide recommendations, refer to DPIRD's [2026 Winter Spring Insecticide Guide](#).

Further information

For more information about GPA, and earlier seasonal activity, refer to the 2026 PestFacts WA Issue 5 article [Check canola crops for green peach aphids to assess virus risk](#) .

For further information contact Research Scientist [Benjamin Congdon](#), in Perth on +61 488 904 480.

Article authors: Benjamin Congdon (DPIRD Perth) and Cindy Webster (DPIRD Narrogin).

Caterpillars are active

Warmer than average temperatures are driving early caterpillar activity across parts of the WA grainbelt, with weed web moth, cabbage centre grub and diamondback moth larvae already feeding in canola crops.

Growers are encouraged to regularly inspect crops and correctly identify caterpillars before making management decisions.

Caterpillar reports

- Northampton
- Geraldton
- Nabawa
- Mullewa
- Tammin
- Bencubbin



A weed web moth caterpillar and visible feeding damage on wild radish. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Weed web moth caterpillars have recently been reported feeding on canola near Northampton, Geraldton, Mullewa and Tammin.



A cabbage centre grub. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Technical Officer Surya Dhakal (DPIRD) recently found a mixture of cabbage centre grub and diamondback moth (DBM) larvae in canola at Ogilvie near Northampton. He also found cabbage centre grubs in canola near Nabawa.



Cabbage centre grubs (circled in red) and diamondback moth larvae (circled in blue) on canola. Photo courtesy of Darren Marquis (Nutrien).

Darren Marquis (Nutrien) reported a young canola crop near Bencubbin infested with both cabbage centre grub and diamondback moth larvae. These likely originated from nearby volunteer canola.

Biology and feeding characteristics



Weed web moth (*Achyra affinalis*)

Cabbage centre grub (*Hellula* sp.)

Weed web moth caterpillars (left) can be distinguished from cabbage centre grub caterpillars (right) by the presence of dark circles along their body. Photos courtesy of: DPIRD.

The weed web moth is a native species and, as its name suggests, the larvae often spin webs on leaves, binding them together. They are foliage feeders and can skeletonise leaves of a wide range of broadleaf hosts, including canola, lupins and lucerne.

Weed web moth larvae are slender, slightly hairy and vary in colour from grey-green and dark green to pale brown. They have black heads, and older larvae have a dark stripe along the middle of their backs, with three rows of small dark spots on each side. They can grow up to 15 to 20 mm in length.

Weed web moth larvae can be mistaken for cabbage centre grubs as they look very similar in appearance, and both have brown banding along the body. However, they can be differentiated by the type of feeding damage they cause. Cabbage centre grubs tunnel into the growing points of canola plants and other brassica plants and tunnel between leaf surfaces, resulting in white blisters. Cabbage centre grubs are also a warm season species, as we move into the winter months, numbers should decline rapidly.



A diamondback moth caterpillar. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Diamondback moth (DBM) caterpillars are pale green, cigar-shaped and up to 12 mm in length. They wriggle violently when disturbed and can drop down on a fine thread.

Damage from DBM caterpillars appears as chewed leaves, buds and flowers, with the leaf chewing ranging from irregular holes to extensive leaf damage.

DBM caterpillar activity typically slows down in cold, wet weather conditions and then increases in spring. DBM larvae are rarely an economic problem early in the season. However, warm and dry conditions favour DBM feeding and reproduction, and considerable leaf damage may occur.

If you are unsure what caterpillar species you are finding in your crops and pastures, use the [PestFacts WA Reporter app](#) to request a diagnosis.

Managing caterpillars and considering beneficials

Growers are encouraged to monitor their paddocks for caterpillar activity and only apply insecticides if caterpillars are present, actively feeding, and the crop is unable to outgrow the feeding damage. Under favourable growing conditions, crops can outgrow minor damage.

There are registered insecticides suitable for most caterpillar pests.

Weed web moth and cabbage centre grubs can be difficult to control using contact insecticides, as they produce webbing between leaves that creates a protective layer and reduces exposure.

Growers are reminded that DBM have shown high levels of resistance to many insecticide groups, including synthetic pyrethroids (e.g. alphacypermethrin, esfenvalerate, gamma cyhalothrin, lambda cyhalothrin), carbamates (e.g. methomyl) and organophosphates (e.g. chlorpyrifos).

For insecticide information, growers and consultants can refer to DPIRD's [2026 Winter Spring Insecticide Guide](#).

If spraying, growers should consider using insecticides that are less harmful to beneficial predator insects. For information on insecticide toxicity to beneficial insects, refer to Cesar Australia's [Beneficials Chemical Toxicity Table](#).

Further information

To read about earlier caterpillar activity this season, refer to the 2026 PestFacts WA Issue 3 article [Weed web moth and other caterpillars are damaging crops](#).

For more information, contact Senior Research Scientist [Svetlana Micic](#) in Albany on +61 8 9892 8591.

Article authors: Cindy Webster (DPIRD Narrogin) and Bec Severtson (DPIRD Northam).

Lucerne flea and mite activity update

- Beacon
- Kellerberrin
- Bruce Rock
- Kojonup
- Munglinup
- Esperance



An adult lucerne flea. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Lucerne flea have recently been reported by an Agworld app user in oats near Beacon.



A balaustium mite (left) and redlegged earth mites (right) on leaves. Photos courtesy of DPIRD.

Balaustium and redlegged earth mites (RLEM) were recently found in canola and lupin crops near Munglinup and Esperance.



An adult bryobia mite. Photo courtesy of Andrew Weeks (Cesar Australia).

Bryobia mite activity has been reported in canola near Kellerberrin, Bruce Rock, Kojonup, Munglinup and Esperance.

Correct identification of mites is critical for effective control, as different species can vary in their susceptibility to certain insecticide groups, either naturally or through insecticide resistance.

For more information on diagnosing lucerne flea and mites, refer to 2026 PestFacts WA Issue 2 article [Lucerne flea and mites are active](#) and the Grains Research and Development Corporation's (GRDC's) [Crop Mites Back Pocket Guide](#).

Redlegged earth mite egg hatch calculator

Cooler temperatures have led to further hatchings of earth mites, including blue oat mite and RLEM.

Growers and consultants can use Cesar Australia's [RLEM egg hatch calculator](#) to enter their post code and see whether RLEM eggs are predicted to have hatched in their area. This information can be used to target monitoring efforts and insecticide sprays. In most areas of the West Australian grainbelt, RLEM have already hatched.

Management of mites and lucerne flea

Before spraying for mites, consider if the crop is outgrowing the feeding damage. In many years, and under favourable growing conditions, mites emerge from eggs during or after crop germination and plants can outgrow mite feeding damage. High numbers of mites in crops often occur after a pasture rotation, whereas continuously cropped paddocks often have low to negligible numbers of mites due to well-timed insecticide sprays in previous crops.

For registered insecticide recommendations for mites and lucerne flea, refer to DPIRD's [2026 Winter Spring Insecticide Guide](#).

If you suspect that you have insecticide resistant RLEM populations in paddocks with a history of repeated insecticide applications from the same mode of action group, contact

DPIRD Senior Research Scientist Svetlana Micic to arrange testing. Further information is available in the GRDC Redlegged earth mite best management practice guide.

Further information

To read about earlier lucerne flea and mite activity this season, refer to the 2026 PestFacts WA Issue 2 article Lucerne flea and mites are active.

For more lucerne flea or mite information, contact Senior Research Scientist Svetlana Micic in Albany on +61 8 9892 8591.

Article author: Cindy Webster (DPIRD Narrogin).

Would you like to host a native budworm moth trap this year?



A native budworm moth pheromone trap installed in a lupin crop. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Native budworm moths typically migrate into agricultural regions during late winter and spring, but their arrival can be unpredictable and often occurs earlier in northern areas.

Pheromone trapping can detect large migratory influxes or waves of native budworm moth arrival, and gives an early warning that moths are present and the likely risk of caterpillars appearing in crops in the weeks following.

By tracking weekly moth counts, growers and consultants can focus sweep-netting and crop checks at the right time, increasing the chances of detecting caterpillars early and making timely decisions about whether control measures are required.

All canola and pulse crops grown in Western Australia are susceptible to native budworm, including lentils, field peas, faba beans, chickpeas and lupins. Other host plants include vetch, serradella and lucerne.

Native budworm moth trapping program

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) field researchers will again begin weekly pheromone trapping for native budworm moths (*Helicoverpa punctigera*) in June and are seeking interested volunteer growers and consultants to host a trap from July or August through to October.

DPIRD's trapping program extends from Esperance to north of Geraldton. Volunteers play an important role in broadening the moth trapping network and filling gaps across the WA grainbelt.

It's easy to host a trap



Native budworm moths captured in trap during migration flight. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Request a native budworm pheromone trap or new pheromone lures by contacting DPIRD Research Scientist [Bec Severtson](#) in Northam.

Install the trap in your crop following the step-by-step instructions available on the department's [Native budworm moth trapping](#) page.

Once your trap is set:

- **Check** for moths each Tuesday, record the number and empty the trap.
- **Report** the number of moths, **including nil counts**, to 0477 228 068 or by [email](#).
- Continue moth trapping until swathing or harvest and then store your trap until the next season.

Moth flight activity updates

You can view a live map of native budworm moth trap results via Cesar Australia's [MothTrapVisWA](#) page.

Use the date-range bar at the bottom of the map to track weekly changes in moth flight numbers. Data collection will commence in mid-June 2026.

Weekly moth trap data will also be posted on DPIRD's [Native budworm moth trapping](#) page, with activity updates shared through DPIRD's [PestFacts WA e-newsletter](#).

When to start checking for caterpillars



Sweep netting for native budworm caterpillars in a podding canola crop. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Big moth counts don't always mean big caterpillar numbers. Weather, predators and parasites can reduce survival, so sweep-netting is still essential to assess caterpillars in-crop and decide whether thresholds are reached. Native budworm caterpillars are at their most damaging when they feed on the fruiting parts and seeds of plants.

Eggs laid by moths during August usually take at least two weeks to reach 5 mm before they are detectable through sweep netting. At average August temperatures, it takes about seven weeks for larvae to grow from the egg to the fully grown caterpillar stage (about 40 mm long), which is the most damaging stage for grain crops.

The amount of yield loss to various lupin, pulse and canola crops differs, and so the spray thresholds differ too. Growers can calculate their spray thresholds using DPIRD's [budworm threshold calculation webpage](#).

Growers and agronomists can also access DPIRD's free [MyPestGuide CropScout](#) application (currently for iOS only) and enter their caterpillar monitoring results into the sweep net module to calculate native budworm spray thresholds quickly in the field.

Insecticide options for native budworm are listed in DPIRD's [2026 Winter Spring Insecticide Guide](#).

Further information

For more information about the native budworm and its impact on crops, refer to the department's [Native budworm](#) page.

For further information, contact Research Scientists [Dusty Severtson](#) on +61 8 9690 2160 or [Christiaan Valentine](#), in Northam on +61 8 9690 2197.

Article author: Bec Severtson (DPIRD Northam).

Hoverfly larvae

- Katanning

Hoverfly larvae were recently found in a department trial at Katanning. As part of the Canola Allies project, four plants, each with approximately 200 green peach aphids on them, were placed in a bare paddock to see what was present in the landscape in early May. After 14 days, the plants were brought back to the laboratory, and each plant had one or more hoverfly larvae on it. This was surprising, as hoverflies are usually observed in paddocks during spring. However, it indicates that beneficial species are present in paddocks earlier in the season than commonly reported.

Continuing our theme of showcasing a beneficial invertebrate in each issue, this article explores the biology of this species and the important role it plays in supporting invertebrate pest management.

Identification



A hoverfly larva feeding on an aphid. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

The hoverfly larva is a small (8 to 10 mm long), legless maggot that varies in colour but is typically greenish brown. It has a slug-like body that tapers towards a pointed head. Without careful observation, it can sometimes be mistaken for a caterpillar.

Hoverfly larvae are beneficial insects because they feed on a range of soft-bodied insect pests, with a preference for aphids. A single larva can eat up to 400 aphids during the two-to-three week period before pupation.



An adult hoverfly. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

The adult hoverfly resembles a bee, with black and yellow colouration, but has only one pair of wings. Adults hover over flowers and are commonly seen darting above flowering canola crops. They feed on nectar and pollen.

The pupal stage is a smooth, tan coloured, teardrop-shaped form that may be seen attached to cereal and canola plants. Pupae are slightly larger than a wheat grain (approximately 7 mm long and 3 mm wide).

When spraying, consider spray options that are soft on this predator and other beneficial insects. For details on insecticide toxicity to beneficial insects, refer to Cesar Australia's [Beneficials Chemical Toxicity Table](#).

Further Information

The [PestFacts WA Reporter app](#) can be used to request a diagnosis or report beneficial or pest insects.

To read about beneficial invertebrates found in WA's grainbelt, refer to the 2026 PestFacts WA articles in Issue 6 [Predatory beetles](#) and Issue 5 [Balancing sprays with biological control: the benefits of Parasitoids](#) .

For more information on beneficial insects, refer to the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) [Back Pocket Guide – Beneficial Insects](#) .

For further details, contact Senior Research Scientist [Svetlana Micic](#) in Albany on +61 (0)8 9892 8591.

Project acknowledgement: Canola Allies project is a five-year national Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) project led by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). Canola Allies is researching the use of predatory insects that target canola pests. It is a collaboration with the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) and Murdoch University.

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Important Disclaimer

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