

# Onion Insect Pests

Thrips (*Thrips tabaci*, *Frankliniella* species),  
Maggots (*Delia antiqua*, *D. platura*),  
Leafminers (*Liriomyza* species)



FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2



FIGURE 3



FIGURE 4



FIGURE 5



FIGURE 6

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**COMMON HOSTS:** Onion, Garlic

## **SYMPTOMS (ON ONION):**

**FIGURES 1 & 2 •** Thrips (onion, western flower) feed primarily on leaves reducing bulb growth. Larvae are 0.5–1 mm (0.02–0.04 inch) long, yellow and elongate (cigar-shaped). Adults (2 mm or 0.8 inch) are winged and darker (gray to brown) in color. Onion thrips transmit Iris yellow spot virus (IYSV).

**FIGURES 3 & 4 •** Maggot larvae tunnel in roots, seedlings and young bulbs causing reduced stands and stunted plants. Larvae are cream colored and legless (8 mm or 0.3 in long). Adults are brownish gray flies (10 mm or 0.4 in) similar in appearance to a housefly.

**FIGURES 5 & 6 •** Leafminers are the larvae of small flies that make meandering tunnels under the surface of onion (and other crop) leaves. Flies are small (1.5–2 mm or less than 0.08 inch), and yellow and black. Larvae are pale-colored maggots found only within the leaf mines, and may have pale green or yellow coloration as they become full grown.

## **FACTORS FAVORING:**

- High temperatures greater than 30°C (86°F) favor thrips, while lower temperatures favor maggots.
- Moisture stress (drought) also favors thrips; while excess moisture favors maggots.
- These insect pests are favored by frequent cropping to Alliums (every 3–4 years), early-season planting; and variable plant density (thrips).

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## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT:**

<http://www.alliumnet.com/http://onion.ipmpipe.org>

<http://wiki.bugwood.org/PIPE:Onion>

Compendium of Onion & Garlic Diseases and Pests, 2nd Ed.