

Lantana biocontrol

Teleonemia scrupulosa



TELEONEMIA SCRUPULOSA

Teleonemia scrupulosa, a leaf-sucking bug, is one of the most widespread and seasonally damaging biocontrol agents for lantana.

ORIGIN

- *T. scrupulosa* occurs naturally in Mexico, Central America and South America.
- Laboratory cultures of *T. scrupulosa* originate from Mexico.
- The insect was first released in Australia in 1936.

BIOLOGY

- Adults and nymphs suck the cell contents from the undersides of leaves, causing them to brown and wither.
- Damaged plants may become severely defoliated and stunted, with fewer flowers and seeds produced.
- Development time from egg to adult is about four weeks.
- Adults live for about three months.

AUSTRALIAN DISTRIBUTION AND IMPACT ON LANTANA

- *T. scrupulosa* is found from Cairns to Sydney.
- The bug is most abundant and damaging in warm, dry areas such as central and southern Queensland and central New South Wales.
- Populations can increase quickly over the warmer months.
- The bug causes the greatest damage from late summer to autumn, when plants can become defoliated.
- *T. scrupulosa* is found in greater numbers on the white, red, and pink-edged red-flowering varieties of *Lantana camara* than on the common pink-flowering variety.

