

# lantana biocontrol

## *Ophiomyia lantanae*



# OPHIOMYIA LANTANAE

*Ophiomyia lantanae*, a seed-mining fly, is the most widely distributed biocontrol agent for lantana.

## ORIGIN

- *O. lantanae* occurs naturally from southern USA to Brazil.
- Laboratory cultures of *O. lantanae* originate from Mexico.
- The insect was first released in Australia in 1914.

## BIOLOGY

- Adults feed on flowers and lay eggs in immature green fruits—one egg per fruit.
- Larvae feed on the fleshy pulp of the seed, but leave the embryo undamaged.
- Damaged fruits are unattractive to birds (the main seed dispersers), so seed dispersal is reduced.
- Development from egg to adult takes about 24 days.
- Adults live for about 12 days.

## AUSTRALIAN DISTRIBUTION AND IMPACT ON LANTANA

- *O. lantanae* is found from far north Queensland to Mt Dromedary in New South Wales, and also around Darwin and Perth.
- The fly is common in the moist, warm areas where lantana flowers readily.
- The fly causes the greatest damage in late summer and autumn, when up to 80 per cent of fruit can be infested.
- *O. lantanae* is found on all varieties of *Lantana camara*.

