



PestFacts WA

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Contents

- [Lucerne flea and mites are active](#)
- [Weevils in canola](#)
- [Rutherglen bugs](#)
- [Slaters](#)
- [Canola blackleg risk forecasts are online](#)

Lucerne flea and mites are active

Recent rainfall and mild, warm weather conditions have resulted in lucerne flea hatching. Although weather conditions have been mild, conditions have been met for redlegged earth mites (RLEM) to hatch.

These mild, warm weather conditions are also expected to have resulted in bryobia (clover) mite and balaustium mite hatchings. As cooler temperatures prevail, this will lead to further hatchings of earth mites, including blue oat mite and RLEM.

Lucerne flea

- Cranbrook



An adult lucerne flea. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Lucerne fleas have been found on capeweed and marshmallow near Cranbrook.

Lucerne fleas are springtails, or Collembola, and have a forked appendage under their abdomen that enables them to spring off vegetation when disturbed. Adults are globular, grow to about 3mm in size, and are green-yellow in colour with mottled darker patches. Nymphs are smaller and paler in colour.



Windowing chewing damage by lucerne flea on canola cotyledon. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Lucerne flea hatching can be patchy across paddocks, and the pest can be more problematic on loam/clay soils. They attack a range of crops and pastures, causing characteristic 'windowing' of leaves. Feeding damage begins at ground level, with the underside of leaves being damaged. This feeding damage can be confused for caterpillar chewing.

Bryobia mite

- Wongan Hills

- York
- Beverley



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

Agworld app users have reported finding bryobia mites in canola near Wongan Hills, York and Beverley.

Bryobia mites are most damaging when emerging crops are moisture stressed, and temperatures are above 20°C. Look for stippling feeding damage, and dark brown mites with prominent forelegs on the upper surface of leaves. Growers are recommended to consider control only if crops are unable to out-grow feeding damage. Cold and wet weather is not favourable to bryobia mites.

Redlegged earth mites

- Boyup Brook
- South Stirling



Redlegged earth mites. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

RLEM have been reported in oats and pasture near South Stirling, and in pasture near Boyup Brook.

This RLEM activity is supported by Cesar Australia's online [RLEM egg hatch calculator](#) predicting that RLEM eggs have hatched in the Albany and Boyup Brook regions. Viewers can enter their post code in this tool to see what it predicts for eggs hatching depending on current climate data.

Summer eggs of RLEM will hatch after 5mm of rain, followed by mean temperatures below 19°C for 10 days.

RLEM adults are 1mm long with a black body and eight red-orange legs. Immature nymphs are often a more reddish colour.

Growers are urged to monitor for RLEM activity in their paddocks and be wary of insecticide resistant populations.

Redlegged earth mite resistance testing in 2026

Resistant RLEM populations are likely to be present in paddocks that have a history of repeated insecticide applications from the same mode of action group.

DPIRD, with co-investment from the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), will be undertaking RLEM resistance testing this year. If you notice RLEM surviving applications of insecticides, please contact DPIRD Senior Research Scientist [Svetlana Micic](#) to discuss and arrange for paddocks to be tested.

Correct identification and management of lucerne flea and mites

Lucerne fleas are often patchily distributed in crops, and spot spraying may be sufficient. Lucerne fleas are not effectively controlled by synthetic pyrethroids (SPs).

If crops are not out-growing damage caused by lucerne flea, control relies on application of organophosphates (OPs) such as dimethoate or omethoate.

When both lucerne flea and RLEM are present, consider control strategies that target both pests. It is recommended to use a product registered for both and apply it at the highest label rate specified for either pest to ensure effective control. If RLEM are resistant to OPs, note that diafenthiuron, which is effective on resistant RLEM, provides suppression of lucerne flea populations in canola.

Crops should be monitored again after spraying, as chemical applications will not control lucerne flea eggs that have already been laid.

Bryobia mites and balaustium mites are more likely to be seen feeding on plants during warm, sunny parts of the day, while RLEM and blue oat mites are more noticeably feeding on leaves on overcast cool days or in the early morning or late afternoon.

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. Applying the wrong chemicals to control a pest may be ineffective and crop damage could continue. This can lead to reduced seedling density or the need to re-sow some paddocks. For more information on mite identification, refer to [GRDC's Redlegged earth mite best practice management guide](#) and [Crop Mites Back Pocket Guide](#).

To reduce the risk of RLEM in paddocks, growers should avoid sowing highly susceptible pasture species (such as clovers and medics) or crops such as canola in areas known to have high mite populations. Where this is not possible, paddocks can be managed by allowing RLEM to fully hatch from diapause eggs and, before this generation lays eggs, spraying out weeds with herbicide and delaying sowing for around seven days. This approach helps lower mite pressure on emerging crops.

Growers can control weeds, especially broadleaf weeds, both within paddocks and along fencelines. This reduces available food sources and decreases mite numbers in these areas.

Insecticides are the primary means of managing RLEM once the crop is out of the ground, but resistance in WA populations is becoming more widespread. This means that it is important to ensure insecticides are only applied when needed.

Before spraying RLEM, consider whether the crop is outgrowing the feeding damage. In many years, and under good growing conditions, mites emerge from eggs during or after crop germination, and plants can outgrow mite feeding damage. However, moisture stressed crops are more vulnerable to mite damage.

Pre-sowing applications of insecticides are unlikely to protect germinating crops from mites hatching after sowing, and a post-emergent spray is often required.

To find registered insecticide recommendations for lucerne flea and mites, refer to DPIRD's [2026 autumn winter insecticide guide](#).

Further information

You can request or confirm identification of lucerne flea and mites by using the [PestFacts WA Reporter app](#). Your reports will also contribute to the interactive PestFacts WA service which issue warnings of pest outbreaks.

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

Article authors: Cindy Webster (DPIRD Narrogin), Bec Severtson (DPIRD Northam) and Svetlana Micic (DPIRD Albany).

Weevils in canola

- Narrikup
- Kojaneerup
- Wellstead
- Esperance region

Desiantha weevils have recently been reported in canola near Kojaneerup, Wellstead and Kojaneerup.

Desiantha weevils have also been found in grassy pasture near Narrikup.

A consultant has observed dead desiantha/spotted vegetable weevils in canola seedlings crops in the Esperance region.

Weevils are notoriously difficult to detect in an establishing crop, and the first sign of their presence may be unexplained chewing damage. This can look like:

- crescent shaped notches on cotyledons and leaf edges
- lopped cotyledons, ringbarking around stems
- seedlings eaten to ground level
- visible bare patches and areas of low surviving plant densities.

If pests aren't visible, setting a simple pitfall trap for 24 hours near damaged seedlings can be a convenient way to catch the culprit. To create a pitfall trap, place a cup with a small amount of water in it into the soil within the paddock and check it the next day. For more information on how to set up a pitfall trap, see the department's [How to monitor for early season pests](#) YouTube video.



A simple pitfall trap, consisting of a plastic drinking cup, left for 24 hours to trap hidden pests. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

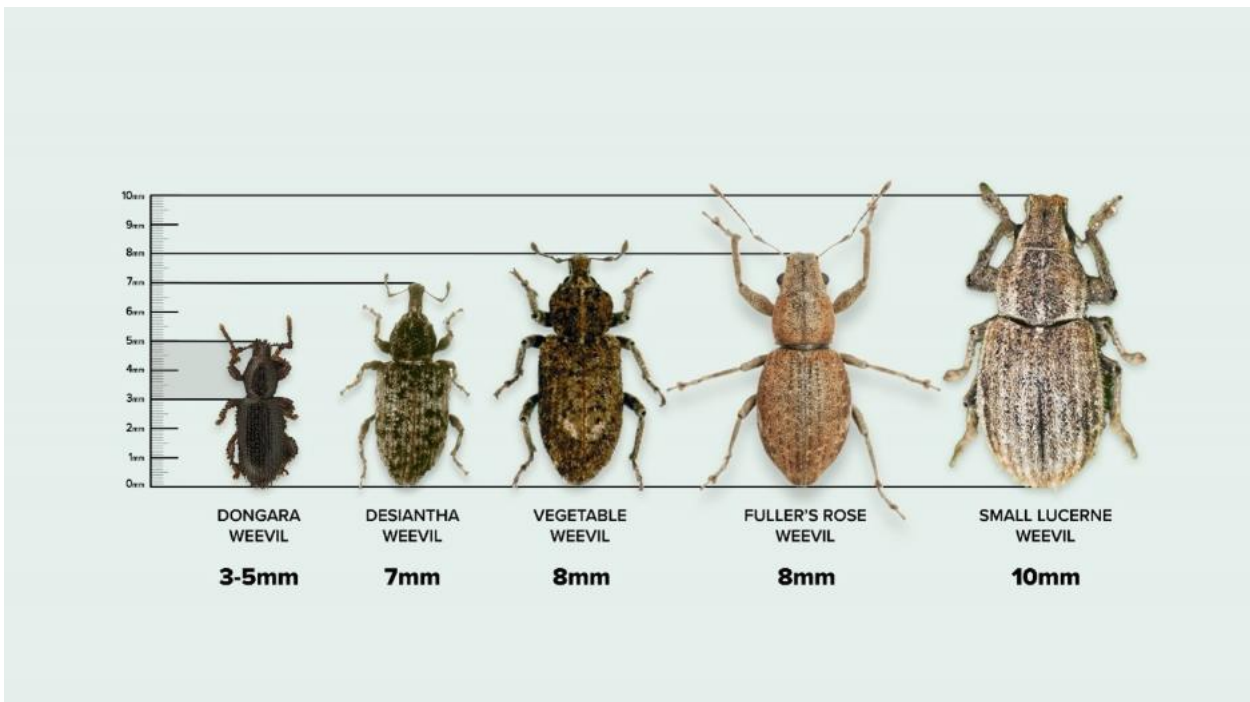
Alternatively, lifting stubble, clods of dirt or digging around the base of chewed plants may reveal hidden weevils.

Know your paddock history and monitor early

Pest weevil outbreaks often recur within the same areas of paddock. Most weevils are flightless, have 1 generation per year, and survive over summer as adults in nearby refuges, including weeds.

Monitoring emerging canola crops in May-June for early weevil damage is critical to help prevent crop losses, especially in moisture stressed crops.

Identifying common and damaging weevils



Weevils of grain crops. Photo courtesy of Grains Research and Development Corporation.

Adult weevils have an extended snout, or rostrum, on their head, and weevil larvae have no legs, distinguishing them from other soil-dwelling beetle larvae and caterpillars.



Vegetable weevil. Photo courtesy of Andrew Weeks (Cesar Australia).

Adult vegetable weevils are about 10mm long with two short white stripes at an angle on each side of its abdomen. Vegetable weevils typically feed on canola near paddock edges or where capeweed was abundant the previous year.



Desiantha (spotted vegetable) weevil. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Desiantha weevil adults are mottled grey-black in colour with grey flecks on the abdomen, and have the typical elongated weevil snout. They grow up to 7mm long and are flightless.

Desiantha weevils are more common in the southern agricultural region, especially in sandy duplex soils or sand over gravel soils. Chewing damage from adult desiantha weevils can be scattered across a canola crop, particularly if the paddock was previously in wheat.



Small lucerne weevil. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Small lucerne weevil adults are about 5mm long, light grey in colour with a white stripe on each side. They are more prevalent in the southern coastal agricultural region and can be a chewing pest of germinating canola crops following long term pasture.



Dongara weevil adult. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Dongara weevils are tiny, approximately 3 to 5mm long, and appear dark brown to black in without prominent markings. These weevils are smaller and darker than other weevils that commonly damage canola.

Dongara weevils can be a significant establishment pest of canola and coriander crops sown in heavy clay soils near Dongara, Mingenew and Three Springs.

To read more about the Department's recent research on Dongara weevils see the 2024 PestFacts WA Issue 1 article [Mid-West canola growers should monitor for Dongara weevil.](#)

For more information on weevil identification visit GRDC's [Crop Weevils: The Back Pocket Guide](#).

Managing weevils in establishing crops

Weevils hide during the day under leaf litter, in cracks and crevices in the soil and in other places with cover. This means that they may not get exposure to applications of insecticides. It is good practice to apply treatments in the late afternoon, as weevils are nocturnally active. Use a high volume of water when spraying for weevils. After spraying, check for new damage in crops or for live weevils before seeding. Reseed bare areas with high rates of treated seed.

To kill the vegetable weevil higher registered rates of insecticides need to be applied than for most pests of canola. Border sprays may help with vegetable weevils that attack the edge of the crop. Insecticides registered for vegetable weevil control are likely to control other weevil species, such as small lucerne weevils and desiantha weevils. However, Dongara weevils have survived high label rates of insecticides used for other weevils.

Desiantha weevil numbers can be reduced by effective control of host weeds in the previous season and of the green bridge following summer rainfall. Recent DPIRD research has shown desiantha weevil can complete their lifecycle on cape weed, cud weed and sorrell.

For insecticide recommendations on managing vegetable and desiantha weevils in canola, refer to DPIRD's [2026 autumn winter insecticide spray guide](#).

Further Information

Report weevil crop damage via the [PestFacts WA Reporter app](#) where you can also request a free identification by our entomologists.

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

Article authors: Bec Severtson (DPIRD Northam), Svetlana Micic (DPIRD Albany) and Cindy Webster (DPIRD Narrogin).

Rutherglen bugs

- Calingiri



Rutherglen bug nymphs on a canola seedling. Photo courtesy of Aimee Tyson (Central Ag).

Aimee Tyson (Central Ag) has reported Rutherglen bugs causing damage to cotyledon canola near Calingiri.

This sporadic and highly mobile native species is known to migrate large distances and appear suddenly in crops. Rutherglen bug (*Nysius vinitor*) adults and nymphs are known to survive on canola stubble at the end of spring and into summer, feeding on canola seed on the ground. In autumn young nymphs hatch from eggs laid on vegetation or the soil and can emerge in large numbers in search of vegetation.



Rutherglen bug nymphs. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Rutherglen bug nymphs are small, dark reddish brown and wingless with a swollen pear-shaped body.



An adult Rutherglen bug. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Adults are 4mm long, have clear wings folded flat on the back, are grey-brown-black in colour and are very mobile.

Rutherglen bugs may damage early sown crops and pastures that emerge in warm conditions. They are often associated with goosefoot, otherwise known as mintweed. The damage they cause is similar to mite sucking, resulting in seedlings becoming stunted, discoloured and distorted. Rutherglen bugs cause the most damage to moisture stressed plants.

Management

Most emerging crops will not have sufficiently high populations of Rutherglen bugs to warrant spraying, however when they are present in large numbers chemical control may be difficult. Repeat sprays are sometimes necessary against re-invasion by mobile populations of nymphs. Effective control of Rutherglen bugs may involve managing canola stubble and host weeds at the end of the previous season.

For insecticide recommendations, refer to DPIRD's [2026 autumn winter insecticide spray guide](#).

Growers are reminded that pre-sowing insecticide sprays are often unnecessary unless there is pest pressure from a high green bridge, pasture etc. Instead, post-sowing pre-emergent sprays are much more effective in protecting germinating seedlings from ground pests (e.g. redlegged earth mites), while post emergent sprays protect seedlings from aerial pests (aphids, moths, bugs).

Further information

For more information, refer to Cesar Australia's [Rutherglen bug PestNote](#).

For more information, contact Senior Research Scientist [Svetlana Micic](#), Albany on +61 (0)8 9892 8591 or Senior Research Scientist [Dustin Severtson](#), Northam on +61 (0)8 9690 2160.

Article author: Bec Severtson (DPIRD Northam).

Slaters

- Scaddan



Slaters on stubble. Photo courtesy of Quenten Knight (Agronomy Focus).

Quenten Knight (Agronomy Focus) recently found common slaters very active in newly seeded canola near Scaddan. The paddock was treated with Transcend® bait with strong uptake by slaters observed.

Slaters are land-living crustaceans that have a hard skeleton on the outside of their bodies, seven pairs of jointed legs, and two pairs of antennae.

Also known as woodlice, sowbugs and pill bugs, slaters feed on organic matter in the soil and can occasionally attack living plants by chewing the leaves and stems.

The common slater, *Porcellio scaber*, grows up to 20mm in length and is usually pale grey. The pill bug, *Armadillidium vulgare*, which can roll into a ball when disturbed, grows up to 18mm and is dark brown to black in colour. Both are European species that are now widespread in Australia and have only recently become a problem in high rainfall crops sown into dense stubble.

Slaters can cause extensive damage to emerging seedlings. Damage to canola crops may be more noticeable in later sown crops that have experienced moisture stress and in paddocks with heavier loams and clays. Slaters survive on organic matter on the soil surface and a heavy stubble load may aid their survival over summer. If the organic matter dries out the slaters cannot survive.

Monitoring and managing slaters

Crops can be checked by observing plant damage and searching at night. Slaters are easily found under stubble in the vicinity of crop damage.

Slaters cause uneven rasping-type damage that can appear similar to slug and snail damage. They can chew the tops of emerging cotyledons or leaves of crop seedlings, leaving only the seedling stumps.

Control options are limited but there are some measures that will curb populations including cultural control methods to remove or decrease the amount of stubble on the ground in early autumn.

Early sowing of high-vigour varieties at a higher seeding rate will help compensate for seedling losses from pest damage.

At crop germination the only management option for slaters is to bait or to spray. The application of residual insecticide sprays have had some efficacy in protecting a germinating canola crop from damage. However, as this pest is nocturnal and shelters under stubble it can be difficult to get good spray coverage for their control.

Slaters will seek out baits when actively feeding. Insecticide products with the active ingredients fipronil and metaldehyde are currently the only bait formulation registered for canola in WA for agricultural areas. For insecticide recommendations, refer to DPIRD's 2026 autumn winter insecticide spray guide.

Further information

For more information on slaters, refer to GRDC's Black Portuguese millipedes and slaters factsheet and Cesar Australia's Pill bug and common rough woodlouse PestNote.

For more information contact Senior Research Scientist Svetlana Micic in Albany on +61 8 9892 8591.

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Canola blackleg risk forecasts are online

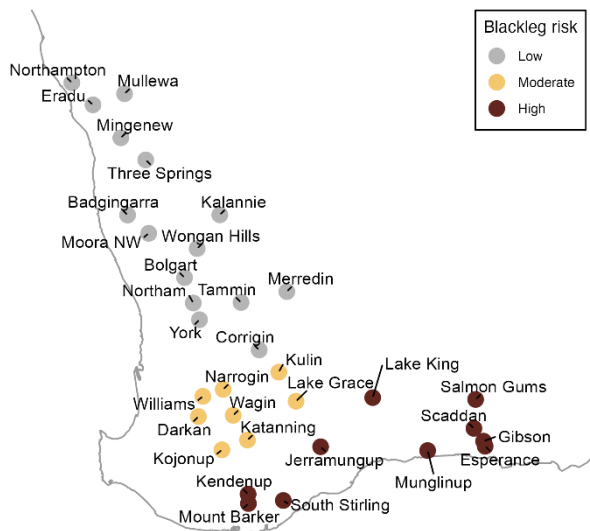


Image 1: Map showing the relative current risk of blackleg spore release coinciding with the seedling stage based upon Blackleg Sporacle model outputs for various locations in Western Australia, 20 April 2026. Map generated by: DPIRD blackleg forecast model.

DPIRD's [blackleg spore maturity forecasts for Western Australia](#) for the 2026 growing season have begun, and forecasts are available online. The [latest forecast](#) is current for crops sown up to 20 April 2026. This forecast will be updated weekly.

Blackleg crown canker can result in yield losses on susceptible canola varieties. The disease occurs when spores are released off the previous season's or 2-year-old canola stubble. When these spores land on canola plants in the seedling stage (up to 4-6 leaf stage) this can result in crown canker forming. It is advised to avoid planting this year's canola crop into paddocks that were sown to canola in 2024 or 2025.

The forecasts show the expected risk of blackleg infection occurring during the 4-6 leaf stage, relative to the date of sowing. For crops sown in early to mid-April, the risk of blackleg spore showers coinciding with the seedling susceptible stage are high for some areas in the Albany and Esperance areas. Growers in these areas should consider using the BlacklegCM decision support tool to determine if they should apply a foliar fungicide to their canola crops during the susceptible 4-6 leaf stage.

The BlacklegCM app has recently been updated to include all the latest variety resistance information and contains updated fungicide group information. This includes clear warnings for growers not to use stand-alone SDHI (group 7) fungicides for the early vegetative, 4-6 leaf stage, foliar sprays where an SDHI (group 7) seed dressing has been used. BlacklegCM is available for download from the Apple App and Google Play stores. This app works on both phones and tablets. For more information refer to DPIRD's [BlacklegCM](#) page.

If you are using the [BlacklegCM decision support tool](#) you can manually enter the blackleg risk levels that relate to your sowing date and location into the app under the “Crop Circumstances – Spore maturity risk” section.

Further information

For more information, refer to DPIRD’s [Canola blackleg spore maturity forecast for Western Australia](#) page to check the blackleg model forecast for your district.

For more information about blackleg in canola contact Senior Research Scientist [Andrea Hills](#), Esperance on +61 8 9083 1144 or Principal Research Scientist [Jean Galloway](#) Northam on +61 8 9690 2172.

For more information about the blackleg risk forecast, or the BlacklegCM decision support tool, contact Principal Research Scientist [Jean Galloway](#), Northam on +61 8 9690 2172.

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