PestFacts WA

Issue: 20
Date: 25 September 2026

Contents

Aphid numbers have been increasing in canola crops

- Yuna
- Nabawa
- Geraldton
- Northam
- Albany

DPIRD surveillance staff have reported finding very high infestations of cabbage aphids and considerable damage in canola crops near Yuna and East Nabawa. In some areas there was stunted plant growth, flower and pod abortion and even plant death. When cabbage aphids kill plants, the aphids die of starvation on the plant, dry up and form a dark crust on the branches and pods.

Cabbage aphids have also been detected recently in canola near Nabawa, Geraldton and Northam.

Turnip aphids were found in canola near Yuna, and green peach aphids (GPA) have been found in canola near Geraldton and Northam. There has also been a significant outbreak of GPA in young forage brassica around Albany, all the aphids were carrying turnip yellows virus (TuYV), and the plants will also be tested for TuYV.

Clusters of cabbage aphids and visible feeding damage and stunted plant growth in canola East of Nabawa.

Cabbage aphids (left), a turnip aphid (centre) and green peach aphids (right).

It is common for multiple aphid species to colonise canola at the same time. In some cases high infestations of cabbage and turnip aphids can cause yield loss in canola during spring through feeding damage, especially in areas where plants are already moisture stressed and aborting flowers or pods due to plant limitations. In moisture-stressed canola crops at the fully podded stage, cabbage and turnip aphid infestations can result in lower seed production or shrivelled seed, as aphids interfere with seed fill.

Growers and consultants can use the PestFacts WA Reporter app to request identification of aphids found in their crops. For more information on identifying canola aphids refer to, 2026 PestFacts WA Issue 14 Later season canola aphid management

Management

Monitor canola crops for aphids, particularly if crops are moisture stressed. Control should be considered when more than 20% of racemes are infested with cabbage or turnip aphid colonies. DPIRD's MyPestGuide CropScout app can be used by growers and consultants

to enter counts of cabbage and turnip aphid infested racemes, calculate spray thresholds and map aphid abundance.

Border spraying may be sufficient for cabbage aphids, which are often confined to the outer 20 to 30 m of crops. Crops are most at risk during early flowering and early pod formation. Consider control measures only if aphid colonies are growing in length on racemes. Regular crop monitoring is required to determine if colonies are increasing or dispersing.

Registered insecticides are listed in DPIRD's 2026 Winter Spring Insecticide Guide. If applying an insecticide, growers need to follow label recommendations for application rates and harvest withholding periods.

DPIRD research has shown that green peach aphid (GPA) does not cause yield loss in flowering canola or later-stage canola crops, and spraying insecticide offers little benefit. GPA is also highly resistant to insecticides, so spraying should be avoided where possible. For information on GPA control, refer to the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) Green peach aphid - best management practice guide.

Beneficial insects such as ladybird beetles, parasitoid wasps and lacewings have been observed recently by DPIRD staff in canola crops across the grainbelt and may help suppress aphid populations. Growers are encouraged to consider insecticide options that are soft on predator insects.

For more information, refer to Cesar Australia's Beneficials Chemical Toxicity Table.

For help identifying beneficial insects, see the GRDC Beneficial insects - back pocket guide.

More information

For more information about canola aphids, and earlier seasonal activity, refer to the articles in 2026 PestFacts WA:

- Issue 14 Later season canola aphid management
- Issue 11 Canola aphid and turnip yellows virus update
- Issue 10 Green peach aphids detected in Esperance port zone
- Issue 9 Canola aphid and turnip yellows virus update
- Issue 7 Green peach aphids and turnip yellows virus detected in canola crops
- Issue 5 Check canola crops for green peach aphids to assess virus risk .

For more information on canola aphids, contact Senior Research Scientist Svetlana Micic in Albany on +61 8 9892 8591 or Principal Research Scientist Dusty Severtson, Northam on +61 (0)8 9690 2160.

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

Native budworm moths have migrated into the southern grainbelt

A native budworm moth.

More than 250 native budworm moths were caught this week in a volunteer-operated pheromone trap at Pingrup, in the Albany port zone, after almost no moth activity since trapping began in July.

This has signalled the arrival of migratory moths in the region as crops are nearing maturity. It follows a large catch at Kondinin last week. High moth numbers have also been recorded by volunteer trappers at Grass Patch in the Esperance port zone.

Any eggs laid by these moths could result in small caterpillars being found over the next few weeks. Crops should be carefully checked using a sweep net or another suitable method to determine if caterpillar numbers are high enough to warrant insecticide spraying.

Caterpillar activity update

- Bindi Bindi
- Bolgart
- Northam
- Kondinin
- Narrogin
- Varley
- Cascade
- Gibson
- Howick

Native budworm caterpillar chewing into a lupin pod (left) and a native budworm caterpillar found feeding on a lentil crop (right). Their colour can range from pale green to dark brown.

Native budworm caterpillars were found at DPIRD's Bolgart, Northam, Narrogin, Cascade, Gibson and Howick canola surveillance sites this week. Many beneficial and predatory insects were also noted in the crops. At Cascade, an average of 7 caterpillars (ranging from 5 to 10) per 10 sweeps were found. Volunteer moth trappers have reported caterpillars on canola at Varley, ranging from 4 to 6 per 10 sweeps, and in low numbers on canola at Bindi Bindi, and on lupins at Kondinin.

The PestFacts WA team have received reports of canola crops being sprayed for large numbers of diamondback moth (DBM). The registered insecticides that are effective on DBM larvae are emamectin (e.g. Affirm®), cyantraniliprole (Exirel®), spinetoram (Success Neo®, and Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) (e.g. Dipel DF®), will also control native budworm caterpillars.

Insecticide options for the control of native budworm (and DBM) caterpillars can be found in DPIRD's 2026 Winter Spring Insecticide Guide.

Bt products can be effective against DBM and budworm, especially on small larvae with good spray coverage. However, control can be slower and more variable than with emamectin, spinetoram, or cyantraniliprole, particularly under high pest pressure.

It is also worth noting that cyantraniliprole is the least toxic to key natural enemies which commonly predate on or parasitise DBM and budworm eggs and larvae. Information about the impact of insecticides on beneficial insects in Australian grain crops is available in Cesar Australia's Beneficials Chemical Toxicity Table.

Some lupin, field peas and vetch crops have been sprayed for native budworm in the eastern grainbelt.

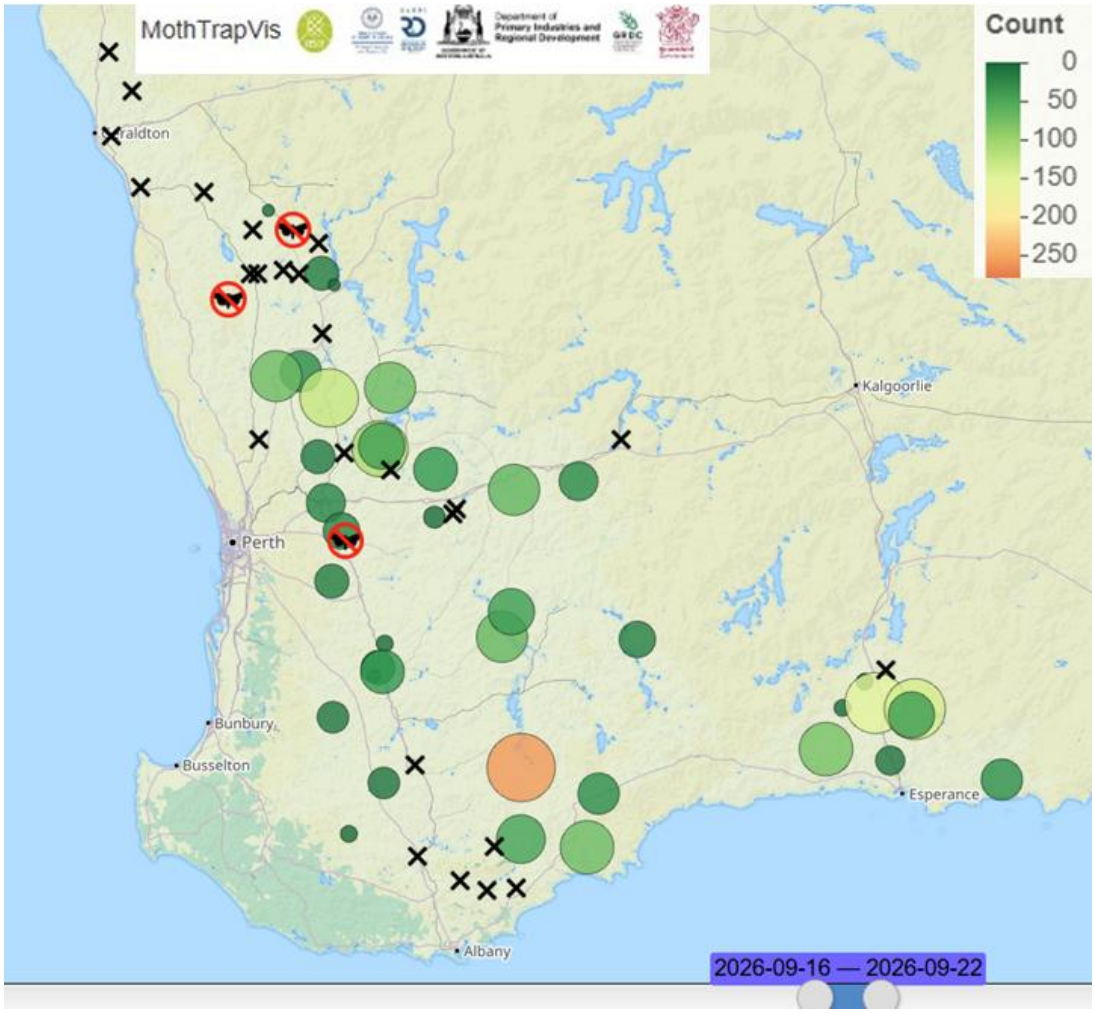
Lupins are at risk to native budworm caterpillars after leaf drop and as pods undergo a colour change. It is important to keep sweeping crops to determine if caterpillars are still present. In some cases, caterpillars may have completed a full life cycle on the leaf material and no longer pose a threat to pods.

Moth trapping results

- Traps located across the grainbelt

The latest native budworm moth trap results from volunteer trappers and DPIRD staff are available to download. You can view a live map of native budworm trap results via the MothTrapVisWA page. Viewers need to select the desired trapping date range at the bottom of the map. Recent results from MothTrapVisWA are shown in figure 1 below.

The highest moth counts recorded during the past week were at Pingrup (258 moths), Grass Patch NW (150), Grass Patch NE (138) and Dowerin (109).



Source: *MothTrapVisWA* Cesar Australia

Figure 1: Native budworm moth trapping results from 16 to 22 September 2026. An X indicates no data, and the red and black moth symbol indicates no moths in trap.

Further information

Detailed information on this pest can be found on the department's Native budworm page.

To read about native budworm activity earlier in the season, and how to manage this pest, refer to the 2026 PestFacts WA articles in:

- Issue 19 Check your crops for native budworm caterpillars
- Issue 17 Diamondback moth and native budworm activity update
- Issue 15 Native budworm caterpillars detected in northern cropping regions
- Issue 12 Waves of native budworm moth migration detected
- Issue 9 Early native budworm moth flights detected in northern and central regions
- Issue 7 Would you like to host a native budworm moth trap this year?

For further information on native budworm, contact Principal Research Scientist Dusty Severtson in Northam on +61 8 9690 2160 or Research Scientist Christiaan Valentine in Northam on +61 8 9690 2160.

Article author: Bec Severtson (DPIRD Northam).

What are you finding in your paddock?

The PestFacts WA service relies on the WA grains industry to report any invertebrates or diseases found in broadacre crops and pastures, even if you're unsure what they are. In return, we provide diagnoses, management advice and timely alerts through the PestFacts WA newsletter, map and other communication channels. This helps growers and consultants monitor for emerging issues and respond quickly.

Regular reporting, including noting when pests or diseases are not present, helps build a clearer picture of their distribution and impact.

How do I report or request a diagnosis?

If you find unfamiliar insects in your paddock during the growing season, download and use our PestFacts WA Reporter app to request a diagnosis. Alternatively, you can email the team at pestfactswa@dpird.wa.gov.au

How do I find out what is being found?

Occurrences are displayed on DPIRD's PestFacts WA map. This map displays all pest and disease occurrences reported to the PestFacts WA service (formerly PestFax) by the WA grains industry since 1996. Users can filter results by host, disorder and time period.

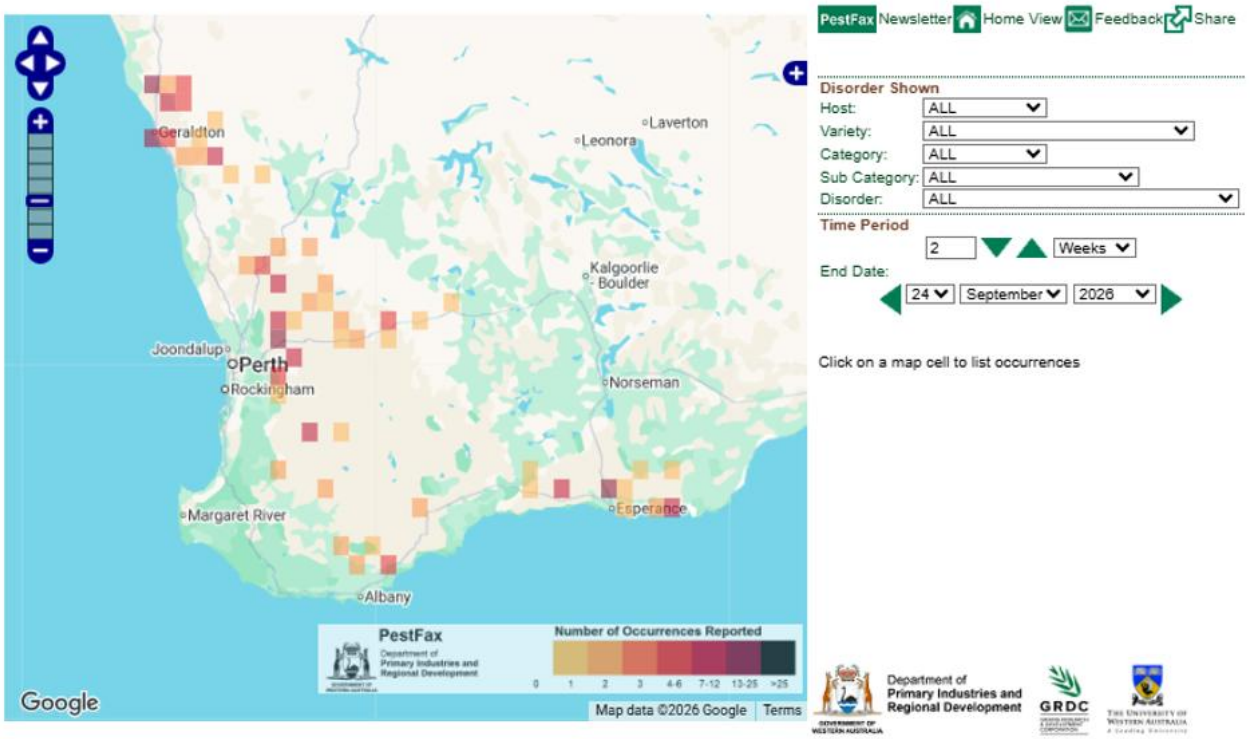


Figure 1. A screenshot of the PestFacts WA map displaying all disorders reported in all crop and pasture types for the 2 weeks prior to 24 September 2026.

PestFacts WA newsletters are distributed regularly during the growing season, alerting growers and consultants to insect and plant disease activity, and providing advice on how to manage them. To receive this newsletter directly in your inbox, subscribe here.

Agworld and Back Paddock collaboration

The PestFacts WA team continues its collaboration with Agworld and Back Paddock this season to collect field data on pests, diseases and weeds. Since 2018 and 2019 respectively, these partnerships have enabled automatic, anonymous reporting from their platforms into the PestFacts WA database via shared Application Programming Interface (API) endpoints. This reporting has increased the volume and geographic coverage of observations available to PestFacts WA, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of pest, disease and weed occurrence across the WA grainbelt.

This collaboration was made possible through a competitive grant funded by DPIRD's eConnected Grainbelt project that was initiated in 2017.

Other collaborative surveillance

The PestFacts WA team collaborates with other DPIRD projects that undertake monitoring and receives regular receives updates from their field observations.

Our work is co-funded with GRDC through the DAW2404-005RTX, Seasonal status of pests and diseases delivered to growers, which carries out routine surveillance for insects and plant diseases.

Further information

For more information, contact Research Scientist Cindy Webster in Narrogin on +61 8 9881 0201.

Article author: Cindy Webster (DPIRD Narrogin).

PestFacts WA webinar recording can now be viewed online

On Wednesday 24 September 2026, Research Scientists Meredith Guthrie, Svetlana Micic, Andrea Hills and Cindy Webster presented on the latest Western Australian climate outlook, spring and autumn invertebrate pest and disease management, and an overview of the PestFacts WA service.

The webinar recording is now available on the DPIRD YouTube channel, and the presentation slides can be downloaded from the DPIRD About PestFacts WA webpage.

For more information on the webinar topics presented, contact Senior Research Scientists Meredith Guthrie in Perth on +61 8 9368 3058, Svetlana Micic in Albany on +61 8 9892 8591, Andrea Hills in Esperance or Research Scientist Cindy Webster in Narrogin on +61 8 9881 0201.

Article author: Cindy Webster (DPIRD Narrogin).