



PestFacts WA

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Contents

- [Australian plague locusts are active](#)
- [Field pea blackspot disease forecasts for WA are available online](#)
- [PestFacts WA webinar recording can now be viewed online](#)

Australian plague locusts are active

- Bullfinch
- Southern Cross
- Moorine Rock
- Burracoppin
- Merredin
- Bodallin

Reports of Australian plague locusts (APL) have been received from several locations in the eastern grainbelt, from Bullfinch to Bodallin. Activity has been observed on bitumen roads during the day, with APL ranging from nymphs to flying adults.

APL are more likely to be present in areas that received summer rainfall. If crop damage is observed, control is warranted. As temperatures drop, APL activity will decrease, and adult APL usually die after over-wintering

eggs are laid.

Crop damage is most likely where emerging crops are close to green pastures and roadside weeds, as APL prefer grasses but can also damage other crops.

Identifying Australian plague locusts and grasshoppers

Australian plague locusts (APL) are sometimes found alongside a range of other, similar looking grasshopper species.

The APL (*Chortoicetes terminifera*) is native to Australia and has an X-shaped marking behind the head. In nymphs, this marking may appear faint but becomes more distinct as they mature. Adult APLs are distinguished from all other grasshopper or locust species by a dark spot on an otherwise clear hind wing, which appears as an elongated black smudge. They also have red tibiae or hindleg shanks.



An adult Australian Plague Locust. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Some Australian locust and grasshopper species have similar X-shaped marks, but adults never have a dark spot on the hind wing. Three commonly encountered *Austroicetes* species found in the same areas as APL, which can also cause crop damage, are:

- Confusing *Austroicetes* (*Austroicetes pusilla*) which have a yellow or pink hind tibia
- South-eastern *Austroicetes* (*Austroicetes vulgaris*), hind tibia has a basal black or brown band, tibia can be reddish in colour
- Small plague locust (*Austroicetes cruciata*), highly variable colour and pattern, hind tibia is usually yellow. This species can occur in high densities.

Adult APLs require green feed to grow and develop eggs. They can produce up to three generations per year. Female APLs lay 30 to 55 eggs in a pod (also known as an egg bed) located 3 to 10 cm below the soil surface. They prefer hard, bare ground or heavier soils for egg laying, although lighter soils may also be used. Egg development is influenced by soil moisture. In southern Australia, most eggs laid during autumn enter winter diapause, with nymphs hatching in spring.



Australian plague locust eggs in a clump of soil aggregated as an egg bed. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.



Australian plague locusts nymphs emerging from their eggs. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Growers observing APL activity now are encouraged to record the location and revisit these areas in spring to check for any hatching APL.

APL activity typically declines with the onset of wet and cooler weather. Warm days are required for APLs to remain mobile and move across the landscape.

You can also use the [PestFacts WA Reporter app](#) to request a diagnosis or report APL or grasshopper activity. This allows the PestFacts WA team to display the information on the [PestFacts WA map](#) and alert other WA growers.

Managing Australian plague locusts

Where APL numbers are high (more than 10 per square metre) in pastures adjacent to paddocks with emerging crops, those crops may be at risk of damage, particularly given the warm weather experienced at the start of this growing season.

The most effective strategy is to monitor seeded paddocks for locust numbers and apply an insecticide if crops are being damaged.

A number of chemicals are registered for locust control, including many already used in canola paddocks for other insect pests. While synthetic pyrethroids may have been included in a knockdown mix, these sprays are unlikely to provide much residual protection for crops now.

Insecticide sprays are most effective when applied early in the morning on a day that is expected to warm up. Adult APLs are more likely to come into direct contact with the spray when temperatures are cool, as they move more slowly. As the day warms, adults will move onto sprayed vegetation and are more likely to ingest the insecticide. Continue monitoring paddocks, as reinfestation can occur after treatment.

For insecticide information relating to APL management, refer to Agriculture Victoria's [Australian plague locust chemical use and crop residues](#) page.

Growers finding APL now, and later in May, will need to monitor those paddocks for egg hatching from mid-September.

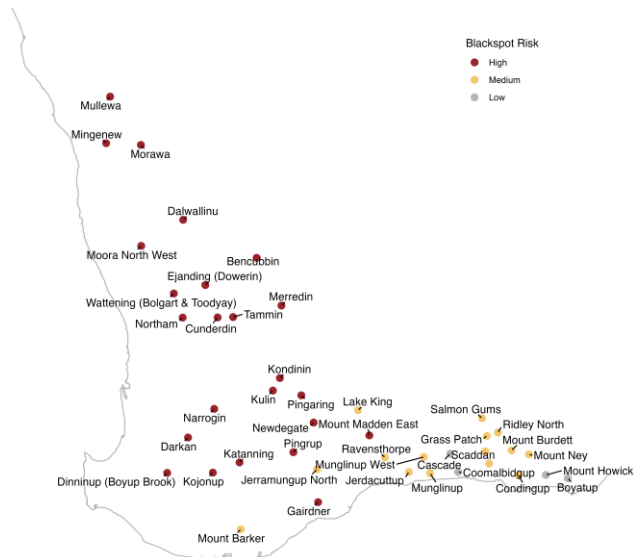
Further information

Further APL information can be found at Cesar Australia's [Australian plague locust](#) Pestnote, and by listening to the DPIRD Grains Convo podcast episode [Australian plague locusts and grasshoppers](#).

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

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Field pea blackspot disease forecasts for WA are available online



Map showing the relative current risk of blackspot spores based upon Blackspot Manager model outputs for various locations in WA, 4 May 2026. Map generated by DPIRD's Blackspot Manager model.

DPIRD's [blackspot in field pea disease forecasts](#) for the Western Australian 2026 season can now be viewed online. The latest forecast from DPIRD's Blackspot Manager model is current to 4 May 2026, it has used weather data from 1 January to 3 May 2026 from the nearest weather station.

Blackspot Manager is a model that predicts the maturity and release of spores that cause blackspot in field pea, using weather data from the nearest weather station. Advice is given on when it is safe to sow field pea.



Field pea with blackspot. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Blackspot in field pea is caused by fungal spores produced on old stubble, which are carried by wind into new crops following rain events. Infection may occur at any stage of plant growth. The most effective way to manage blackspot in field pea is to delay sowing until a significant number of spores have been released off the stubble.

DPIRD recommends not sowing field pea in WA before 10 May and to avoid dry sowing field pea. From next week onwards, field pea sowing can commence at four locations in the Esperance region – Boyatup, Cascade, Coomalbidgup and Mount Howick – where the blackspot risk is already low.

Some areas are currently at medium blackspot risk. In these locations, it is advised to delay sowing until one or two additional rainfall events have occurred. This allows time for blackspot spores on last season's stubble to mature and be released before sowing.

Blackspot risk is high at most locations, and growers in these areas are advised to plan for delayed sowing of field pea.

Delayed sowing of field pea not only reduces blackspot severity but also allows for pre-seeding weed control.

This forecast will be updated weekly between now and the end of June 2026.

Blackspot Manager considers both blackspot spore release levels and agronomic suitability for the sowing recommendations.

Sowing time can depend on a range of factors, and it is recommended to consult an agronomist to determine the optimal sowing window for your situation.

To view the latest forecast and find more information on blackspot refer to DPIRD's [Blackspot in field peas disease forecast](#) webpage.

The Blackspot Manager forecasts can be viewed online. DPIRD offers a free SMS service which involves a weekly text sent to subscribers to inform you of the blackspot risk and giving a recommendation if it is safe to sow. To subscribe to the free blackspot SMS service, text 'blackspot', your name, and nearest weather station to +61 475 959 932. We also send out a weekly email to those who prefer to receive this information in their email inbox. To subscribe to the direct email service, email Blackspot.Manager@dpiird.wa.gov.au .

For more information on blackspot in field peas, or the forecasts, contact Principal Research Scientist [Jean Galloway](#) in Northam on +61 8 9690 2172.

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PestFacts WA webinar recording can now be viewed online



On Thursday 23 April 2026, Research Scientists Meredith Guthrie, Svetlana Micic, Andrea Hills, Sarah Collins and Cindy Webster presented on the latest WA climate outlook, invertebrate pests for growers to monitor, foliar and soil-borne disease issues, and an overview of the PestFacts WA service.

The webinar recording is now available for viewing on the DPIRD [YouTube channel](#) and the presentation PowerPoint slides can be downloaded from the DPIRD [About PestFacts WA](#) webpage.

For more information on the webinar topics presented, contact Research Scientists [Meredith Guthrie](#) in Perth on +61 8 9368 3058, [Svetlana Micic](#) in Albany on +61 8 9892 8591, [Andrea Hills](#) in Esperance on +61 8 9083 1144, [Sarah Collins](#) in Perth on +61 8 9368 3612 or [Cindy Webster](#) in Narrogin on +61 8 9881 0201

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