PestFacts WA

Issue: 9
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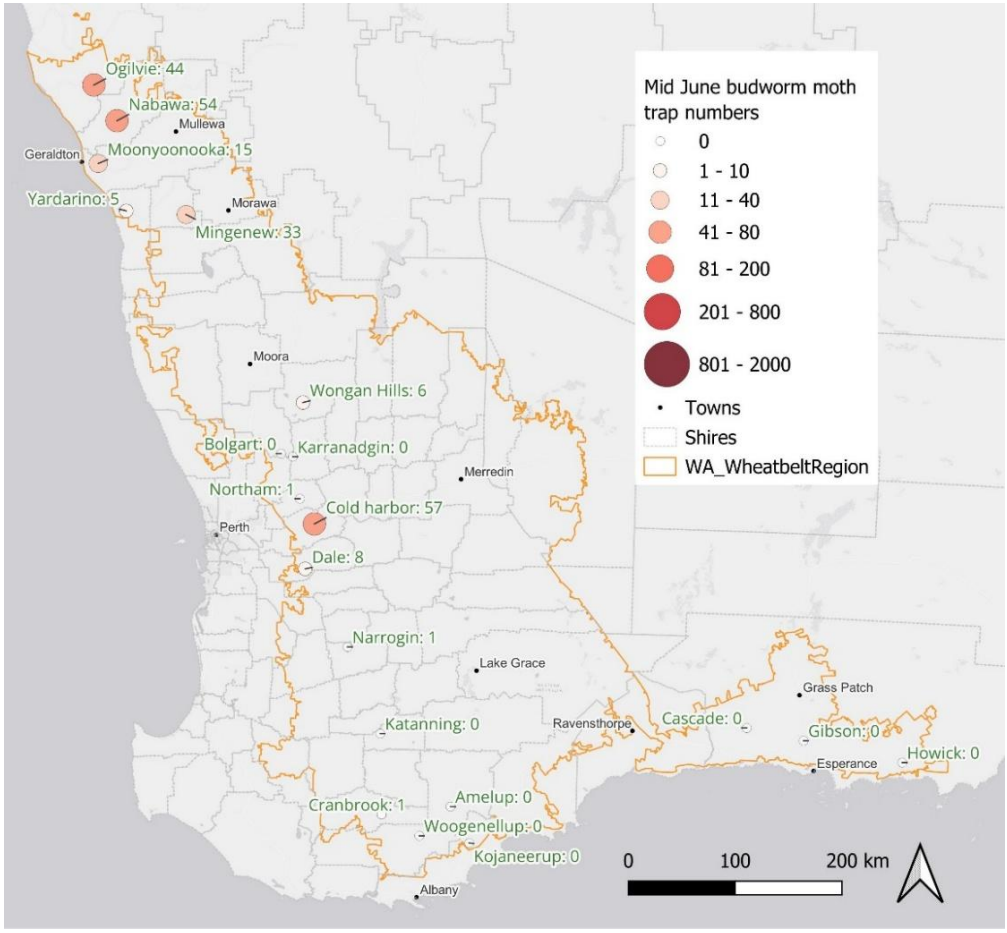
Contents

Early native budworm moth flights detected in northern and central regions

- Locations ranging from Ogilvie to Cranbrook

During early June to 17 June, native budworm moths were detected in the department's pheromone moth traps at Ogilvie (44 moths), Nabawa (54), Moonyoonooka (15), Yardarino (5), Mingenew (33), Wongan Hills (6), Northam (1), Cold Harbor (57), Dale (8), Narrogin (1) and Cranbrook (1). See map below.



Numbers of native budworm moths captured in pheromone traps at DPIRD surveillance sites during early June to 17 June 2026. Map courtesy of DPIRD.

Native budworm moths captured in a pheromone moth trap at Nabawa. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

At the department's Wongan Hills surveillance site, an average of 1.5 native budworm caterpillars per 10 canola seedlings were found this week.

Pulse and canola growers in these areas are encouraged to check their crops in the coming weeks as there may be caterpillar offspring from recent flights. While cold temperatures can slow caterpillar development and rainfall may dislodge many eggs and small caterpillars from plants, monitoring is still recommended in susceptible crops.

Pheromone trapping for native budworm moths is part of the "Seasonal status of pests and diseases delivered to growers" project, a Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) collaboration. To read more about this insect surveillance program, refer to the 2025 PestFacts WA Issue 7 article Timely pest alerts for canola growers .

Monitoring for native budworm caterpillars

A native budworm caterpillar. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Growers can inspect plants for feeding damage and assess caterpillar numbers using a sweep net or by bashing plants into a container. The latter is a good approach if the crop is too short to sweep. Serradella, lucerne, clover and annual medic seed crops should also be regularly checked for native budworm caterpillars.

For tips on checking crops for caterpillars, refer to the 2026 PestFacts WA Issue 7 article Would you like to host a native budworm moth trap this year? .

Management

Pesticide options for controlling native budworm can be found in DPIRD's 2026 Winter Spring Insecticide Guide.

Hosting a native budworm trap

From July to early August, volunteer growers and consultants are invited to host a native budworm moth pheromone trap in susceptible crops.

For more information, refer to the 2026 PestFacts WA Issue 7 article Would you like to host a native budworm moth trap this year? .

If you are interested in hosting a trap, please contact Research Scientist Bec Severtson in Northam.

Moth flight activity updates

Native budworm moth trap results will be displayed on Cesar Australia's MothTrapVisWA page and published on DPIRD's Native budworm moth trapping page.

Further information

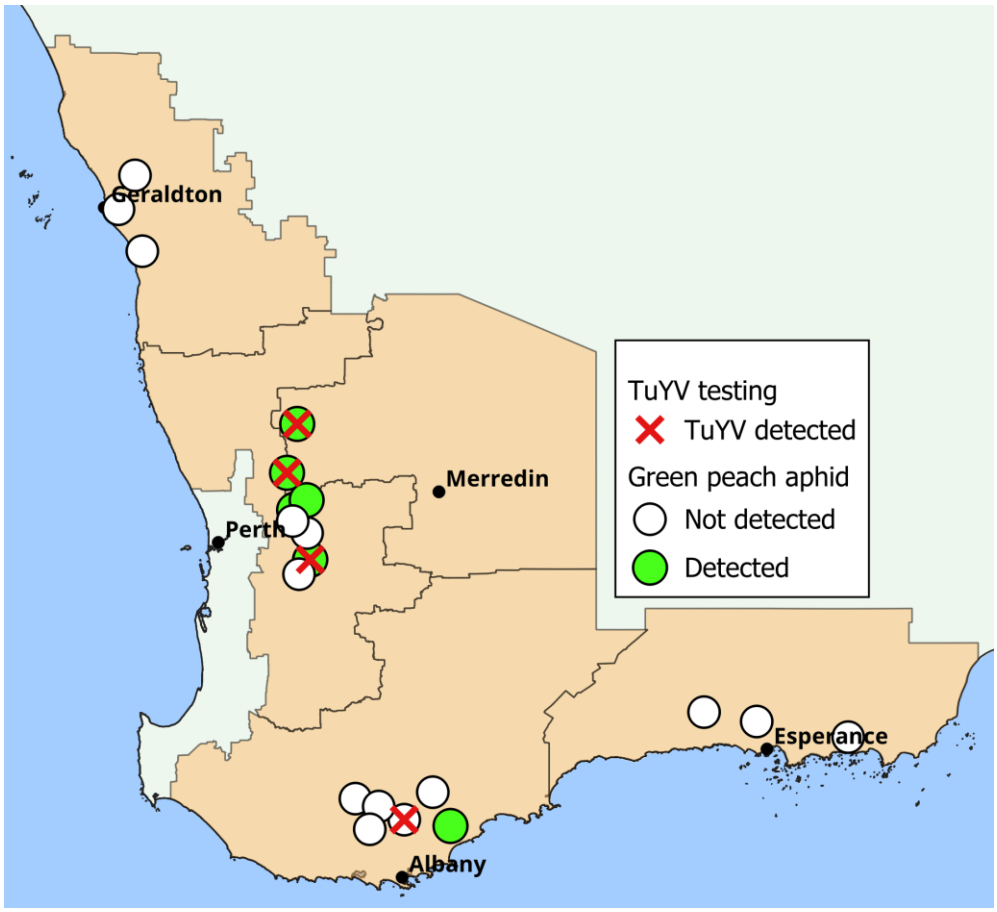
For more information about the native budworm and its impact on crops, refer to the department's Native budworm page.

For further information, contact Research Scientists Dusty Severtson on +61 8 9690 2160 or Christiaan Valentine, in Northam on +61 8 9690 2197.

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

Canola aphid and turnip yellows virus update

- Kwinana West Port zone
- Kojaneerup
- Howick



Findings from green peach aphid and turnip yellows virus (TuYV) monitoring sites, current to 17th June 2026. Map courtesy of DPIRD.

DPIRD's plant virology and entomology surveillance teams have now detected green peach aphid (GPA) infestations at multiple canola crops in the Kwinana West port zone, several of which also have turnip yellows virus (TuYV) infection. Approximately 20% GPA infestation rates were recorded at Northam and Wongan Hills, with lower rates (<10%) at Avondale and Bolgart. TuYV has been detected in crops at Avondale, Bolgart and Wongan Hills. GPA have not yet been detected in surveillance canola crops near York and Dale.

GPA infestation rates could exceed 50% in some canola crops over the next month, potentially resulting in widespread virus infection. Growers with canola in early development stages (emergence to 7-leaf) are encouraged to monitor crops closely and consider TuYV testing of GPA-infested leaves to determine whether a foliar insecticide application is necessary.

GPA have also been detected on traps near Kojaneerup in the Albany port zone, although they have not yet been found in the crop. The map above shows TuYV and GPA detections recorded up to 17th June 2026.

Turnip aphid has been detected on traps around Esperance, and cereal aphids have been detected on traps in the Kwinana West, Albany and Esperance port zone.

Turnip aphids on the underside of a canola leaf. Photo courtesy of Quenten Knight (Agronomy Focus).

Quenten Knight (Agronomy Focus) also recently reported finding turnip aphids near Howick. He commented that there were low numbers of turnip aphids on the underside of plant leaves, but they were widespread across the paddock.

DPIRD staff will continue monitoring for aphid activity and TuYV using yellow sticky traps and routine inspections of canola paddocks in the Geraldton, Kwinana West, Albany and Esperance regions until August 2026. This surveillance is co-funded by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) project DAW2305-003RTX, “Effective virus management in grains crops”. Findings from this surveillance will be regularly shared through the PestFacts WA newsletter.

Monitoring

Growers are encouraged to monitor canola crops, including those sown with neonicotinoid treated seed, for GPA using the guidelines outlined in the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) Manage turnip yellows virus in canola factsheet. See screenshot below.

Table 4: GPA monitoring and insecticide application guidelines for TuYV control in canola

Management phase	Growth stage	Vulnerability of crop to TuYV	Monitoring frequency	Monitoring method[1]	Action guideline	Follow-up action guideline
1	Emergence to 3-leaf	Very high	Every 1 to 2 weeks	Pull out and thoroughly inspect 20 plants for GPA along 50 m transect from paddock boundary. If GPA found: check another 20 plants on a new transect at different point in the paddock. Send any GPA-infested leaves for virus testing[2]	If GPA found on >10% of plants and TuYV present OR has been detected in the area – consider insecticide application	Monitor crop after application using Management phase 2 protocol 2 to 4 weeks after first spray to assess requirement for second spray
2	4-leaf to 7-leaf	Moderate to high	Every 2 to 3 weeks	Pull out and thoroughly inspect 20 plants for GPA along 50 m transect from paddock boundary. Send any GPA-infested leaves for virus testing	If GPA found on >30% of plants and TuYV present – consider insecticide application	Monitor crop after application using Management phase 3 protocol 2 to 4 weeks after first spray to assess requirement for second spray
3	8-leaf to stem elongation	Low to moderate	Once	Thoroughly inspect 20 plants. Send any infested leaves for virus testing	If GPA found on >30% of plants and TuYV present – consider an insecticide depending on value of crop and other risk factors[3]	Not required
4	Flowering onwards	Low to nil	Foliar insecticide application targeting GPA is unlikely to have economic benefit			
Once GPA have infested and spread virus to more than 50% of plants, it is likely too late for insecticides to have an economic benefit						

[1] GPA easier to see in good light and when there is no moisture or mud on leaf. [2] Requires access to a diagnostic laboratory.
[3] Risk of yield losses can depend on the TuYV strain and the sensitivity of the canola variety sown, and losses may be greater in the presence of abiotic stress.

Source: WA DPIRD

Green peach aphid monitoring and insecticide application guidelines from the GRDC Manage turnip yellows virus in canola factsheet.

The risk of losses from TuYV infection in canola is highest when TuYV-carrying GPA are present during the early phase of crop development (emergence to 7-leaf stage). Regular monitoring during this phase is advised.

At least 20 plants should be pulled and closely inspected for GPA along a transect from the crop boundary to 50 m into the crop, as TuYV can be transmitted by just one or two aphids, and GPA can be difficult to spot at low numbers.

TuYV may cause foliar symptoms including leaf reddening or purpling beginning on the edges of lower leaves, and plant stunting. However, these symptoms will only appear weeks or months after transmission occurs and cannot be used to proactively monitor infection. In some conditions, TuYV may not cause obvious foliar symptoms yet still cause significant yield loss. Laboratory testing remains the most reliable method of confirming the TuYV presence.

The optimal temperature range for GPA population growth is 20-25°C, so cool winter conditions may slow GPA infestation rates in some areas.

For more information on identifying GPA and TuYV symptoms, refer to the 2026 PestFacts WA Issue 5 article Check canola crops for green peach aphids to assess virus risk.

If GPA are found in canola, growers can contact PestFactsWA or Senior Research Scientist Benjamin Congdon to arrange TuYV testing and discuss management options.

Management

Managing GPA and TuYV in canola relies on timely, evidence-based spraying guided by monitoring rather than prophylactic calendar spraying.

Insecticides influence the epidemic during early secondary spread, when aphid populations within the crop begin driving rapid, exponential increase in virus transmission.

Virus infection in the crop is initiated by aphids (usually winged) bringing virus into the crop from nearby hosts (crops, weeds or volunteers). This is called primary spread. Its scale and duration determine how effective a single spray can be. When primary spread is brief and limited, a timely application can slow virus movement. When it is prolonged, monitoring after spraying becomes essential to assess reinfestation and guide any follow-up action.

Spraying too early (before aphids arrive) or too late (once virus is widespread) has little impact. Calendar-based prophylactic sprays are unlikely to provide robust control and contribute to insecticide resistance in GPA.

Currently, afidopyropen, flonicamid and sulfoxaflor are the only registered actives for GPA in canola that stand a chance of being effective for this use case.

For more guidelines, refer to GRDC's Manage turnip yellows virus in canola factsheet.

For registered insecticide applications, refer to DPIRD's 2026 Winter Spring Insecticide Guide.

Further information

For more information about GPA, and earlier seasonal activity, refer to the articles in 2026 PestFacts WA Issue 7 Green peach aphids and turnip yellows virus detected in canola crops and Issue 5 Check canola crops for green peach aphids to assess virus risk .

For further information contact Research Scientist Benjamin Congdon, in Perth on +61 488 904 480.

Article authors: Benjamin Congdon (DPIRD Perth) and Cindy Webster (DPIRD Narrogin).

Sclerotinia stem rot

With widespread rainfall over the past week and cooler conditions, growers with early sown canola crops that are now flowering may be considering fungicide applications for sclerotinia. Only crops grown in paddocks, or nearby paddocks, with a history of sclerotinia are at risk. As it is early in the growing season, the risk of crop infection is hard to assess, so the best tool to use is the SclerotiniaCM decision support tool.

Symptoms

Sclerotinia stem rot infection on canola caused by infected petals dropping into the crop canopy. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Sclerotinia canopy infection is the most common infection pathway in canola, with aerial ascospores produced by apothecia infecting petals during flowering. Lesions occur in the upper half of the plant's main stem or branches and may also be observed on leaves and pods.

Management

DPIRD research has shown that regular rainfall and high humidity (>75%) in the 3 weeks before and after the commencement of flowering are the most conducive conditions for damaging levels of canopy sclerotinia to occur in crops. While fungicide application reduces disease severity, it does not necessarily result in a yield response, so growers should carefully consider crop risk and the value of disease management each season and for each paddock.

For canola crops, also consider whether a response to upper canopy blackleg is likely. For more information, refer to DPIRD's UCI BlacklegCM - Blackleg upper canopy infection management app.

Growers need to consider the following factors when determining their risk of sclerotinia and which paddocks to prioritise:

- Rotation history of the paddock
- History of sclerotinia in the current paddock and surrounding paddocks
- Rainfall events before and after flowering
- Crop growth stage
- Crop density. Dense crops with early canopy cover on loamy soil types are at higher risk.

The SclerotiniaCM decision support tool is available for use by canola growers during flowering to help determine the likely economic returns from applying fungicide at a specific time during flowering for the control of sclerotinia stem rot. Users can enter paddock specific data/history as well as recent and expected weather conditions so that the output relates to their own cropping circumstances. This tool can be downloaded from the App Store or Google Play Store and can be used on both phones and tablet devices. For more information, refer to DPIRD's SclerotiniaCM decision support tool page.

Several fungicide products are registered for the control of canopy sclerotinia in canola. Fungicides need to be applied as recommended per product label. Strategic and responsible fungicide reduces the risk of fungicide resistance developing. For more information on registered foliar fungicides for canola in WA, refer to DPIRD's Fungicides page.

Based on the extensive research conducted by DPIRD, the following in-season sclerotinia management options for canola are:

- Apply a single foliar application at 20-50% bloom, provided conditions are favourable for infection before and during flowering. See Table 1 below for bloom stage identification in canola. Use the SclerotiniaCM tool for guidance.
- A second fungicide application before 50% bloom is generally only beneficial in seasons with an extended wet period. Use the SclerotiniaCM tool for guidance. Fungicides cannot be applied after 50% bloom, but some products have a longer withholding period, so always check the label.

Table 1 Identification of bloom stages in canola (crop average).

Percent bloom	Number of flowers open on the main stem
5%	<5
10%	10
20% (petal drop commences)	11-14
30%	15-20
50% (full bloom, crop is at its brightest)	>20

Growers and consultants are encouraged to report to the PestFacts WA service any apothecia finds or disease observations as the season progresses.

Further information

Further information can be found at DPIRD's Sclerotinia stem rot and its management in canola factsheet and Grains Research and Development Corporation's (GRDC) Sclerotinia stem rot in canola factsheet.

For more information on sclerotinia in canola, contact Senior Research Scientists Andrea Hills in Esperance on +61 (0)8 9083 1144, Ciara Beard in Geraldton on +61 (0)8 9956 8504, Kylie Chambers in Northam on +61 (0)8 9690 2151 or Jean Galloway in Northam +61 (0)8 6690 2172.

Article authors: Ciara Beard (DPIRD Geraldton), Jean Galloway (DPIRD Northam) and Andrea Hills (DPIRD Esperance).

DPIRD's Crop Insect and Disease Identification Workshop

Attendees participating in a hands-on plant disease component of the 2025 workshop. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is offering its annual broadacre crop insect and disease identification workshop again this year.

Date: Tuesday 18 August to Thursday 20 August 2026.
Venue: Metro Hotel Perth, 61 Canning Highway, South Perth WA.

The course will cover insect identification and integrated management on Tuesday 18 August, followed by disease identification on Wednesday 19 August and Thursday 20 August.

This course is primarily designed for agronomists and other grains industry representatives to enhance their skills in disease and insect identification relevant to broadacre crop production in WA. It features a practical, hands-on training approach, professional and experienced presenters, and valuable take-home resource materials.

As usual participants can register to attend either or both components.

Course fees (including GST and ticket fees) are as follows:

- $460.45 for the full three-day program.
- $345.61 the two-day disease module.
- $173.35 for the one-day insect module.

These fees include a course reference book and catering each day.

The workshop is co-funded by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) through the "DPIRD Seasonal status of pests and diseases delivered to growers project" (DAW2404-005RTX).

Numbers are limited for the training days and enrolments close on Friday 24 July 2026.

For further details, or to register your interest in attending, contact Research Scientist Cindy Webster in Narrogin on +61 8 9881 0201 or +61 404 819 534.

Article authors: Geoff Thomas (DPIRD Perth) and Cindy Webster (DPIRD Narrogin).

Slime mould

- Mullewa

Slime mould on wheat and stubble at Mullewa in June 2026. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Technical Officer Melanie Kupsch (DPIRD) recently found slime mould in a DPIRD wheat trial at Mullewa on stubble and plants.

With recent rainfall slime mould may be seen in more paddocks.

Identification

Yellow slime mould on decaying plant matter. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Slime moulds generally appear on decaying plant material and living plants as patches of watery or jelly-like slimy material. After a few days, the jelly-like material produces fruiting bodies which are commonly ash grey, though in some instances they may be bright yellow, red or grey. These fruiting bodies usually occur in great numbers on the affected plant material and may cover an area of up to a square metre.

Warm wet weather combined with high nitrogen levels provide a good environment for the slime moulds.

The slime moulds should disappear if a couple of dry warm days are experienced and do not cause any damage to crops.

Management

No control measures are required for slime moulds. If you have concerns about your livestock eating slime moulds, please contact your local veterinary officer.

Further information

For more information contact Senior Research Scientists Kithsiri Jayasena in Albany on +61 (0)8 9892 8477, Andrea Hills in Esperance on +61 (0)8 9083 1144, Ciara Beard in Geraldton on +61 (0)8 9956 8504 or Principal Research Scientist Geoff Thomas in Perth on +61 (0)428 947 287.

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