LOOK OUT FOR
EXOTIC COTTON PESTS

Many insect and disease pests of cotton from overseas are a significant threat to Australian cotton production. If new pests find their way to Australia, early detection and reporting is key to their successful eradication.

Tarnished plant bug (a) Western plant bug (b)
Insect: Feeds on squares and bolls
Impact: Abortion of young squares, shrivelled seeds and discolouration of lint
Look for: Discoloured and distorted flowers, leaves and squares, blackening of new growth and dieback

Cotton blue disease
Disease: Virus spread by cotton aphid
Impact: Severe stunting, reduced yield and poor quality lint
Look for: Leathery new leaf growth that is intense green-blue with yellow veins and curled margins
Note: Differs from cotton bunchy top disease by lack of leaf mottling

Exotic cotton stainers
Insect: Pierces cotton bolls to feed on seeds
Impact: Discoloured lint, damaged seeds and impacted boll development
Look for: Unusually coloured or patterned stainer species

Cotton leaf curl virus
Disease: Spread by silveryleaf whitefly
Impact: Stunted plants, impaired flowering, boll formation, yield and lint quality
Look for: Cupped leaves, swollen veins and leaf-like growths (enations) along veins

Exotic strains of pests and diseases already being managed in Australia can create new threats if introduced from overseas:
- cotton aphid
- fusarium wilt
- silverleaf whitefly
- bacterial blight
- cotton bollworm
Strains present overseas can be more damaging, have greater resistance or be carrying exotic diseases.

IF YOU THINK YOU’VE FOUND AN EXOTIC PEST CALL THE EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881

Cotton boll weevil
Insect: Larvae develop inside squares and bolls. Adults have a spur on front legs (arrow).
Impact: Square drop and boll rot
Look for: Weevils damaging cotton crops. There are no weevil species known to attack cotton in Australia

Brown marmorated stink bug
Insect: Adults have white bands on antennae, sides of abdomen and legs
Impact: Boll rot, stained lint and shrivelled seeds
Look for: Unusually coloured or patterned stink bugs feeding on bolls

False codling moth
Insect: Pink larvae mine the boll wall then feed on seeds
Impact: Boll rot and damaged seeds
Look for: Tunnel holes in the surface of bolls and secondary infection by diseases

Texas root rot
Disease: Infects roots of plants
Impact: Sudden and severe wilting and death of whole plants
Look for: Circular patterns of dead plants in a field with stems girdled at ground level and white to tan fungal strands on roots

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