



Class Insecta, Insects

Order Thysanoptera, Thrips

The word Thysanoptera means “fringed wings”, and there are 4,700 species across the globe, including 600 in North America. Some thrips species are considered greenhouse pests, feeding on plant tissues and vectoring plant diseases, e.g. tomato spotted wilt virus and impatiens necrotic spot virus. There are a few families of predatory thrips. All thrips have piercing-sucking mouthparts, which enable the insects to cut and remove plant or insect juices.

Predatory thrips

Families Aleoithripidae and Phlaeothripidae

Description and life history: Although the word Thysanoptera means fringed wings, the majority of thrips are wingless. Thrips are minute insects averaging 0.5–3 mm in length. They have slender bodies, short antennae, and short legs ending in one or two claws. They range in color from pale green-yellow to brown or black. Reproduction may be sexual or asexual. Nymphs resemble adults in both size and color. There are several generations per year.

Prey species: Aleoithripidae and Phlaeothripidae are families containing predatory thrips, as well as plant-feeding thrips. Insects in these families feed on other pest thrips, aphids, mites and whiteflies, and other soft-bodied insects.



Predatory thrips adult. (352)
Photo: John Davidson