



Greenlife Industry Australia

YOUR LEVY @ WORK

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 17 November 2020

Growers urged to remain vigilant after Serpentine leafminer detected in Sydney

Greenlife Industry Australia is urging production nursery growers and other horticultural producers to remain vigilant in their on-farm plant protection measures, following the detection of Serpentine leafminer in western Sydney, New South Wales.

Serpentine leafminer was found infesting field-grown vegetables, posing significant risk to Australia's horticultural sector with damaged plants commonly suffering reduced yield and growth and, in some cases, will need to be destroyed.

Though widely distributed across the Americas, Asia, Africa, Middle East and Europe, Australia has managed to remain free from the Serpentine leafminer, until now.

While at this time, detection is geographically isolated, Serpentine leafminer has quickly become widely distributed in established regions and has a proven ability to rapidly develop insecticide resistance, making it difficult to control.

Larvae are laid inside leaf tissue and feed internally, creating mining trails, and hatch out as flies which then lay eggs on surrounding host plants. Female flies puncture the leaves of host plants causing wounds which serve as sites for feeding.

National Biosecurity Manager at Greenlife Industry Australia, John McDonald, is urging all growers to be vigilant with [crop monitoring procedures](#) and the implementation of rigorous plant protection protocols to reduce the risk of further infestation.

"Current data suggests this leafminer has 365 host plant species from 49 plant families including vegetables, ornamentals, and many common weed species," Mr McDonald said.

"Protecting Australia's biosecurity status is critical to our industry as it influences trade and enables us to maintain production and deliver high-quality products to market.

"If growers detect any signs of leaf mining in vegetables, they should immediately contact the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881** as early detection is vital for managing and eradicating pests and disease.

Mr McDonald leads the national nursery industry biosecurity program which is funded by Hort Innovation using the nursery R&D levy and additional funds from the Australian Government. The program works with a wider biosecurity network to help limit the spread of exotic pests and disease.

"Serpentine leafminer is a high-priority plant pest that can cause significant damage to Australia's horticultural sector if established," Mr McDonald said.

"In response, New South Wales Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) and Greater Sydney Local Land Services (GS LLS) are mounting a response to delimit the current distribution of the pest with an eye to eradication or containment and control. Greenlife Industry Australia is also activating a previously submitted Minor Use Permit application with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), to give industry another approach to manage this pest."

For useful identification information and images please use the on-line pest identification platform www.pestid.com.au.

More information on the latest Serpentine leafminer update can be found at the Nursery Production FMS [website](#).

ENDS

The 'National Nursery Industry Biosecurity Program' (NY15004) is funded by Hort Innovation using nursery research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

**Hort
Innovation**
Strategic levy investment

**NURSERY
FUND**

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the nursery research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit horticulture.com.au