CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Aloe Thrips (*Hercinothrips dimidiatus*)

Pest Fact Sheet

Introduction: Aloe thrips is a leaf-feeding thrips that is a pest of cultivated *Aloe* species, particularly *Aloe arborescens*. *Aloe* species are widely cultivated as ornamentals, so this thrips represents a potential horticultural pest of concern in California.

Distribution: Native to Africa, it has since been reported in European countries: Portugal (2012), The Netherlands (2015), France (2018) and Italy (2021). All reports were associated with cultivated *Aloe* plants. It has been intercepted at U.S. ports of entry on imported succulent plants. In 2026, it was detected in San Diego and Santa Barbara Counties, California.

Description: Adults are small (0.97–1.25 millimeters) with fully developed wings. Females have a distinctive bicolored appearance, while males are more yellow-orange. The forewings have two dark bands separated by a pale median area approximately equal in length to the dark band nearest to the body. When viewed under a microscope, lateral microtrichia are present on the dorsum of the abdomen. Males have three pairs of stout spine-like setae on raised areas near the end of the abdomen, with the last pair weaker and positioned laterally.

Biology: Aloe thrips is closely associated with species of *Aloe*, although its biology remains poorly known. Larvae feed and develop on the upper and lower surfaces of mature leaves. Adults feed and reproduce on mature leaves, but they may be found in the flowers. In California, this thrips is commonly found on *Aloe arborescens*, but it has been collected on other species of *Aloe*, including *Aloe dawei*, *Aloe munchii*, and *Aloe vera.* Although collections have been reported from non-*Aloe* plants, such as *Haworthia*, their host status remains unconfirmed for this thrips.

Economic importance: *Aloe* species are widely cultivated commercially as ornamentals in Mediterranean climates. Damage to *Aloe* by this thrips can be superficial, yet render ornamental plants unmarketable. Symptoms initially appear as localized silvering and discolored scars, primarily on older leaves. Severely infested plants may exhibit extensive necrosis of older leaves and, in extreme cases, the death of infested plants. The movement of ornamental *Aloe* provides a pathway for introduction and spread of this thrips.

Adult aloe thrips on *Aloe*.

Adult female. Scale bar = 0.25 mm.

Associated damage to *Aloe*.

References:

Mateus, C., Franco, J. C., Caetano, M. F., Borges da Silva, E., Ramos, A. P., Figueiredo, E., Mound, L. 2015. *Hercinothrips dimidiatus* Hood (Thysanoptera: Thripidae), a new pest of *Aloe arborescens* Miller in Europe. *Phytoparasitica*, 43(5): 689–692.

Schifani, E., Mazza, G. 2021. *Hercinothrips dimidiatus* (Thysanoptera, Thripidae), an emerging pest of *Aloe arborescens* [Asphodelaceae] newly recorded from Italy. *Zootaxa*, 5039(3): 440–442.

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