



Citizen Science Trapping Program

This year as part of the Great Biosecurity Quest we are asking people to keep an eye out for tomato potato psyllid (TPP) and other biosecurity pests. One way that you can play your part in protecting Victoria's biosecurity is by joining our citizen science trapping program where you can place insect sticky traps in your garden and send them back to us for review.

What is TPP and why are we looking for it?

TPP is a small insect that feeds on solanaceous hosts such as tomato, potato, eggplant, chili and capsicum, and was detected in Victoria for the first time in November 2024 on the Bellarine Peninsula. This was the first detection in Australia outside Western Australia. Agriculture Victoria is undertaking surveillance to determine if TPP is present in other areas.

What is a sticky trap and why do we use them?

Some insect pests are tricky to monitor. They may be very small, especially when immature, or they may evade detection, inhabiting nooks on stems and leaves. Some species are green and are difficult to see against plant foliage.

Sticky traps are pieces of coloured plastic or cardboard, typically yellow in colour, coated with a thin layer of glue. Once you peel back a protective layer to expose the sticky surface you can then place them vertically in a paddock, veggie patch or on fruit trees with a twist tie or attached to a stake or fence post. Coloured sticky traps can help to detect the presence of insects that otherwise might go undetected.


How does this help protect our biosecurity?

TPP poses a considerable threat to home gardeners and commercial vegetable growers alike. TPP attacks host plants such as tomato, potato, chilli and capsicum. It can also carry a serious exotic bacteria known as *Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum* (CLso), which can cause zebra chip disease in potatoes. CLso has not been detected in Australia. Ongoing surveillance and testing will continue to support early detection and confirm Victoria is free of CLso.

By putting traps in your garden, you will be a part of surveillance efforts to keep an eye out for TPP and other biosecurity pests. We hope you will also talk to your friends and neighbours about this program, to help raise awareness about the importance of keeping watch for invasive pests in Victoria.

What is involved if I join?

Once you receive your sticky trap, we will ask you to follow the instructions to place it in your garden. After two weeks you will need to place your trap into the reply-paid envelope and send it back to Agriculture Victoria. Our biosecurity experts will review your sticky trap to identify any



invasive insect pests that may have collected on the trap. If our biosecurity experts do identify any suspect pests, they will be in touch and might ask to visit your property to collect additional insect specimens.

How can I join?

If you'd like to be involved, simply [fill out this form](#) and we will send you a trapping kit.

You can find out more about biosecurity and other ways you can get involved in citizen science on our [Great Biosecurity Quest](#) webpage and more about TPP on the [Agriculture Victoria](#) webpage.

If you have further questions about the trapping program, please contact biosecurity.strategy@agriculture.vic.gov.au.