

# PSYLLID — *Acizzia solanicola*

## BACKGROUND

The psyllid, *Acizzia solanicola*, is new to New Zealand.

It was found in Auckland in February 2012. To date, the only known host plants in Auckland are woolly nightshade (*Solanum mauritianum*) and eggplant (*Solanum melongena*). The psyllid is not a risk to human health.

It is believed the psyllid is native to Australia where it has been detected on several solanaceous species – eggplant, woolly nightshade, Cape gooseberry and angel's trumpet (an ornamental species). It is not known to infest other solanaceous crops such as capsicum, potato and tomato. The only commercial crop it has been recorded feeding on is eggplant.



Close-up image of *A. solanicola* nymph (immature stage) with the honeydew "bag" being produced.

## WHAT DOES IT DO?

Feeding by nymphs can cause malformation of leaves, wilting, premature senescence and crop loss to eggplant. Damage is usually confined to new leaves and flowers. Severe feeding damage can cause death of growing tips and the premature loss of flowers.

## WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

**NYPHPS:** Length about 1 mm and pale yellow/green in colour.

**ADULTS:** Length 2.5–3.0 mm with transparent wings. Males have a dark brown to black head and thorax with a pale abdomen. Females are pale yellow/green in colour.

## WHERE WOULD I FIND THEM?

**NYPHPS:** Look on the under surface of leaves near the base and along the main vein. Nymphs can also be found on the stem near new unfurling leaves.

**ADULTS:** Adults are found on the underside of leaves. However, when first colonizing a new host, adults tend to congregate on the upper surface of new unfurling leaves and young leaves.

Adults produce honeydew globules while the nymphs produce thin to thick honeydew "bags" of various lengths. When large numbers of psyllids are present, the affected leaves can take on a silvery sheen due to the presence of the bags.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is seeking information on host range and distribution of *Acizzia solanicola* in New Zealand. If you suspect you have found *Acizzia solanicola* on your solanaceous crop, please call MPI on **0800 80 99 66**.



Adult male of *A. solanicola*.



Adults on underside of woolly nightshade leaf.



Comparison of male *A. solanicola* (top) and the tomato potato psyllid *Bactericera cockerelli* (bottom).