



Government of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Food Production

PEST ALERT

Tomato leaf miner, *Tuta absoluta* Not present in Trinidad and Tobago

What is it?

The tomato leaf miner, *Tuta absoluta* is a tiny moth whose larva attacks solanaceous plants (like tomato, melongene, peppers, nightshade and jimson weed) and also beans. It is native of Central America and can also be found in South America, Europe and the Mediterranean.

What do I look for?

Damages:



Fig.1-Bioplanet; Fig.2-Prof. Yamina Guenaoui, University of Mostaganem, Algeria; Fig.3 and 4- JM Cobos Suarez, Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Medio Rural y Marino, Madrid; and Fig.5-Shahram Farrokhi, Iranian Research Institute of Plant Protection



The tomato leaf miner pierces into buds, shoots, stems, leaves, flowers and fruits. It feeds on the inner tissue, leaving the leaf transparent (Fig.1), as it feeds it deposits its excrements. Mines turn brown and become necrotic (Fig. 2). The inside of the stem appears hollow and brown (Fig. 3). Affected fruits show boreholes and mines under and around the sepal with heaps of dark, granular excrement on the surface (Fig. 4). Holes and mines serve as entry points for other organisms resulting in secondary rot (Fig. 5).

Why is it a problem?

It attacks the buds, stems, leaves, flowers and fruits. Affected fruits are unsuitable for sale. It can cause 100% loss. It is spread by infested fruits and packaging material. The population can grow very rapidly as it completes its life cycle in 24 days (having 12 generations per year) and each female can lay up to 260 eggs.

Insect:



JM Cobos Suarez, Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Medio Rural y Marino, Madrid



Eggs are creamy white to yellow and laid singly in the upper parts of the plant (Fig.6). The larva has four stages. The first stage is about 0.5 mm long and cream-coloured. It turns yellowish-green and has a black stripe at the back of their head (Fig.7). Full-grown larvae are about 7.5 mm and greenish pink. The pupa is light brown and in a cocoon (Fig.8). The moth is small 7mm, dark grey brown with dark spots on the wing, its antennae are long, and the legs and palps are ringed with black and brown (Fig.9).

What can I do?

- Report suspicious sightings to 646-6284
- email pictures to reportpest@gmail.com