

Octotoma scabripennis



Octotoma scabripennis, a leaf-mining beetle, is one of the most widely distributed and seasonally damaging lantana insects.

Origin

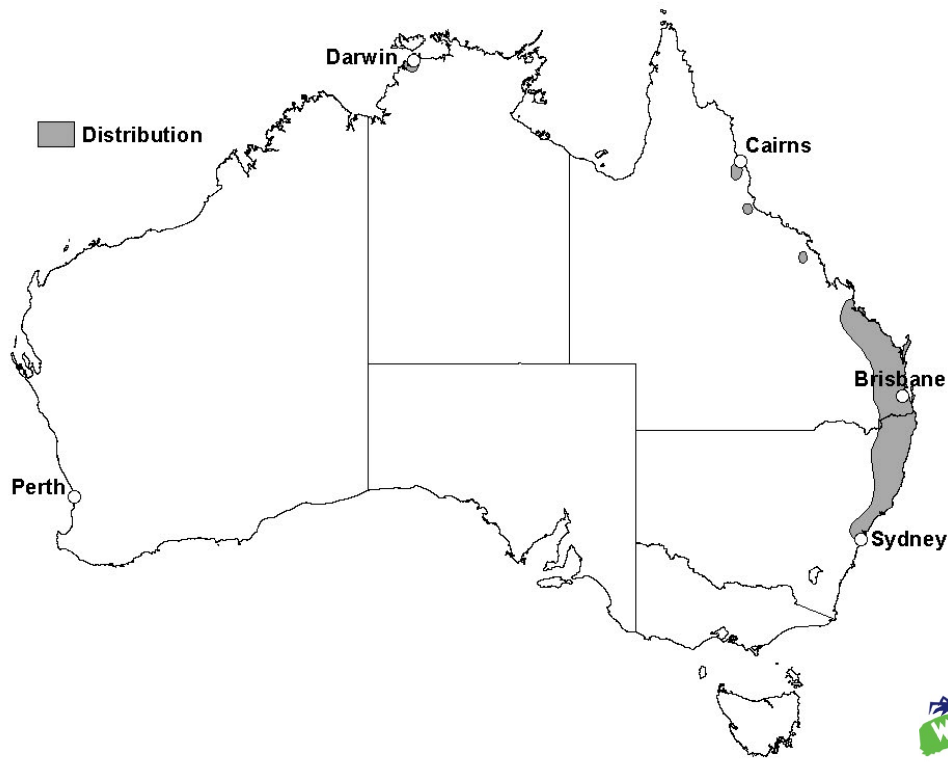
- *Octotoma scabripennis* occurs naturally from Mexico to Nicaragua.
- Cultures of *Octotoma scabripennis* originated from Mexico.
- The insect was first released in Australia in 1966.

Biology

- Adults feed on the upper surfaces of leaves, leaving small scarification marks.
- Eggs are laid on the edge of adult feeding scars.
- Larvae feed in middle leaf layers, causing dark blotches.
- Pupation occurs in the leaves.
- Development from egg to adult takes 34–45 days.
- Adults live for 6–9 months, but may enter a period of inactivity during winter when conditions are unfavourable.

Australian distribution and impact on lantana

- *Octotoma scabripennis* is found from far north Queensland to Sydney, and also around Darwin.
- The beetle is most abundant in subtropical, shady, wet, coastal areas—such as the region from Kempsey in New South Wales to Bundaberg in Queensland.
- The beetle causes the greatest damage in late summer and autumn, when plants can become defoliated, causing plants to become stunted and produce fewer flowers and seeds.
- *Octotoma scabripennis* is found on all varieties of *Lantana camara*, and is often present with *Uroplata girardi*.



Note: Landholders are advised not to consume their time collecting this insect for distribution. This insect has been widely released and is now found in all areas which are climatically suitable. Due to its own ability to disperse, this insect will be periodically/seasonally present in areas that are climatically suitable for it.

This fact sheet is developed with funding support from the Land Protection Fund.

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