



## Psyllids on Lilypillies Fact Sheet

### What are psyllids?

Psyllids are very small insects that are related to aphids and scale but look more like a miniature version of a cicada. They cause major damage to some species of lily pillie in Australia particularly if the summer season is mild and humid. As the insects are so small the first sign that you will usually see is the damage caused on the new growth of your lily pillie. The photo below shows very typical psyllid damage. (images from Yates)



The insect causes damage from the moment that it is attached to the leaf as an egg. The egg is attached in such a way as to ensure that the developing nymph is fed directly from the plant. The young nymphs are able to move around very readily between plants and for this reason a whole hedge can easily be badly damaged. As the insect matures it will settle down to find a permanent home and “embeds” itself in the leaf causing the typical pimple type damage.

The options currently available for **psyllid control** are:

- direct control with a systemic insecticide such as Confidor or EcoNeem
- Let nature take its course and rely on indigenous predators such as birds, various insects, spiders, mites and fungi in limiting pest populations. This is not likely to lead to a short term control in severe cases is likely to leave the Lilypillies looking very shabby
- Keep the plant as healthy as possible with adequate water and fertiliser to encourage healthy growth thus enabling them to be better able to withstand and recover from damaging attacks.
- Ask for resistant varieties in your local nursery.

**Resistant species** and varieties for the local area include

1. *Syzygium leuhmanii* and related cultivars
2. *Syzygium wilsonii*
3. *Syzygium australe*—select form
4. *Achmena smithii*