

Lantana biocontrol

Falconia intermedia



FALCONIA INTERMEDIA

***Falconia intermedia*, a leaf-sucking bug that has been recently approved for release in Australia.**

ORIGIN

- *F. intermedia* occurs naturally in Mexico, Florida and the Caribbean.
- Laboratory cultures of *F. intermedia* originate from Jamaica.
- The insect was first released in Australia in 2000.

BIOLOGY

- Adults and nymphs suck the cell contents from the undersides of leaves, causing them to brown and wither.
- Damaged plants may become severely defoliated and stunted, with fewer flowers and seeds produced.
- Development time from egg to adult is about three weeks.
- Adults live for about two months.

AUSTRALIAN DISTRIBUTION AND IMPACT ON LANTANA

- *F. intermedia* has been released at numerous sites in New South Wales and Queensland.
- The bug is present at a few sites in North Queensland but it appears to have died out at other sites.
- Heatwaves and drought in the years 2001–2003 affected many sites in New South Wales and southern Queensland.
- The insect prefers warm, humid areas where plants are in leaf all year round.
- Populations can increase quickly over the warmer months.
- The bug causes the greatest damage from late summer to autumn, when plants can become defoliated.
- *F. intermedia* performs well on all lantana varieties except the common pink-flowering variety.
- Field releases of this bug are continuing in Queensland and New South Wales.