

## THRIPS SCARRING

### WHAT IS IT?

Brown scars with a scabby or leathery appearance can be caused by avocado thrips, small flying insects that feed directly on immature fruit. Internal fruit quality is not affected, but obvious feeding scars can cause downgrading or culling of affected fruit.



### WHAT CAUSES IT?

As the fruit grows, early feeding by thrips becomes more apparent as the scars expand across the skin. Thrips scarring is sometimes called “alligator skin.” Scarred fruit can continue to grow in size, but generally remains smaller than normal. The flesh is generally healthy and green. Scarring from limb rub can also cause fruit scarring that may be confused with injury from avocado thrips.

Thrips move to young fruit when leaves harden. Almost all damage occurs when the avocado is 0.2 to 0.6 inches (5–15 mm) long.<sup>10</sup> Although Hass avocados are susceptible to feeding until they reach about 2 inches, thrips feeding rarely causes scars on fruit larger than about 0.75 inches.<sup>10</sup> Scarring on young fruit may not become obvious until the fruit enlarges. It is important to recognize that this is an external defect that generally does not cause any internal fruit damage.

### WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Proper field management can help reduce the presence of pests throughout the season. Mission growers implement integrated pest management systems to consistently monitor pest activity.



**Does not cause internal damage**



**Fruit expected to ripen and taste normal**