

# Linear bug

## Linear bug

*Phaenacantha australiae*

## Distribution

Linear bug occurs from northern Queensland south to the Sarina district. It may be introduced, as it appeared suddenly in 1917.

## Damage

Linear bugs feed on the underside of leaves with the leaves turning yellow and the tips drying (Photo 1). Where the affected leaves face the sun, they can turn a red-purple. Damaged leaves are more prone to fungal attack.



Photo 1: Linear bug damaged cane.

## Description

The adult is long and thin, about 9 mm in length, and orange-brown to dark green-brown (Photo 2). Nymphs are similar, but are wingless and orange-yellow. Nymphs go through five growth stages (instars).

## Biology

Linear bugs occur throughout the year on grass or cane, but numbers peak in spring.



Photo 2: Adult linear bugs on cane.

Eggs are laid on the soil surface around the roots of grasses. Young nymphs feed in protected areas near the base of plants. Linear bugs are usually found near grassy fields.

## Management

Linear bug numbers will not build up in grass-free fields, and natural enemies generally keep them in check. Insecticides are not required.