CAPS Datasheets provide pest-specific information to support planning and completing early detection surveys.

Cacopsylla pyri

Scientific Name
Cacopsylla pyri (Linnaeus)

Synonym(s):
Psylla pyri (L.)
Psylla pyrarboris Šulc

Common Name
European pear sucker, Pear psylla

Type of Pest
psyllid

Taxonomic Position
Class: Insecta, **Order:** Hemiptera,
Family: Psyllidae

Figure 1. European pear sucker summer-form adult (Source: National Institute of Agricultural Botany, East Malling, UK)

Pest Recognition
This section describes characteristics of the organism and symptoms that will help surveyors recognize possible infestations/infections in the field, select survey sites, and collect symptomatic material. For descriptions of diagnostic features, see the Identification/Diagnostic resources on the AMPS pest page on the CAPS Resource and Collaboration website.

Pest Description

Adults
Fully developed summer-form adults are greenish blue when freshly emerged and turn reddish orange soon after, with forewing membranes that are clear with dark veins (Fig. 1) (Burckhardt and Hodkinson, 1986; Wille, 1950). Winter-form adults are blueish black with cloudy forewing membranes and darker, more pronounced wing veins compared to those of summer-forms (Fig. 2) (Burckhardt and Hodkinson, 1986; Wille, 1950). Intermediate forms, with darker heads and red abdomens, can be seen in the last summer generation (Wille, 1950). Winter-form and summer-form adults are roughly the same size (2-3 mm) (Wille, 1950), but the summer-form is typically slightly smaller; size will vary from season to season (Civolani et al., 2023; Rieux and d'Arcier, 1990). Summer-form females are generally sedentary and rest on pear leaves for days during egg laying, but males are more active (Wille, 1950). Adults retreat to the interior of treetops on hot summer days (Wille, 1950).

Figure 2. Adult summer-form **(A)** and winter-form **(B)** of the European pear sucker (Source: NIAB East Malling, UK and Laura Reeves, University of Reading, Berkshire, UK)

Eggs

Psyllid eggs are small, oval, and yellowish white when freshly laid, later turning yellowish orange, and are laid singly in a row or in groups of 2–25 (Fig. 3) (Priore, 1991; Wille, 1950). Winter-form females lay eggs close to flower buds; summer-forms lay eggs on young shoots, leaves, and leaf buds (Stratopoulou and Kapatos, 1992).

Figure 3 Eggs of European pear sucker (Source**:** NIAB East Malling, UK)

Nymphs

Nymphs develop through five instars (Wille, 1950). Early instars are yellowish orange with clearly visible red eyes (Fig. 4A). Their bodies are flattened and become cylindrical and darker as they develop (Fig. 4B). Developing wings (wing pads) are visible from the third instar onwards (Wille, 1950). First-generation nymphs feed on flower buds, but subsequent-generation nymphs feed on leaf buds and young shoots (Stratopoulou and Kapatos, 1992).

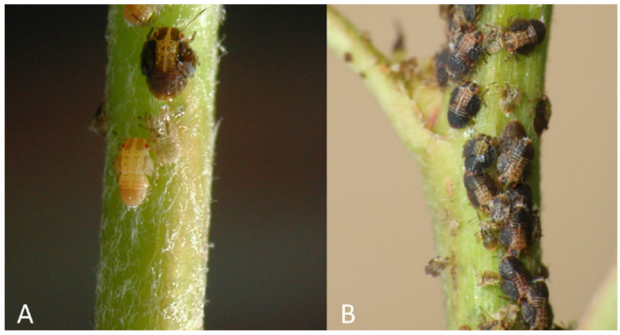

Figure 4 Immature stages of European pear sucker (Sources: A. NIAB East Malling, UK; B. Iliya Mityushev, EPPO Global Database)

Symptoms

Adults and nymphs of European pear sucker feed on phloem (a sugar-rich vascular fluid) from pear buds, flowers, leaves, fruits, and twigs (Civolani, 2012; Erler, 2004; Sanchez and Ortín-Angulo, 2012; Stratopoulou and Kapatos, 1992). As they feed, they excrete honeydew, which promotes growth of sooty mold (black fungus) and russeting on fruit (rough brown patches or streaks on the fruit's surface) (Fig. 5) (Civolani, 2012; Erler, 2004; Nin et al., 2021; Sanchez and Ortín-Angulo, 2012). Heavy infestations cause 'psylla shock' that results in defoliation and death of pear trees (Civolani et al., 2023; Erler, 2004). '*Candidatus* Phytoplasma pyri' is transmitted by the pest and causes pear decline, which is characterized by stunted shoots, small or curled leaves, reduction in fruit size, twig dieback, and premature leaf drop (Carraro et al., 1998; Civolani, 2012).

Figure 5. Symptoms of European pear sucker infestation: Sooty mold on pear leaf **(A)**; russeting on pear fruits **(B)**; pear decline caused by '*Candidatus* Phytoplasma pyri' **(C)** (Source: Juan Antonio Sánchez, Instituto Murciano de Investigación)

Easily Mistaken Species

Cacopsylla pyricola, a closely related pest, is widespread in the United States and is a serious pest of pear production (Civolani et al., 2023; Nottingham et al., 2022). It shares many features with *C. pyri,* including feeding habits, behavior in pear orchards, appearance (Fig. 6 & 7), and common name (pear psylla) (Civolani et al., 2023). As discussed in Burckhardt and Hodkinson (1986), *Cacopsylla pyri* is distinguished from *C. pyricola* by the shape of the male clasper (sickle-shaped in *C. pyri*, more leaf-shaped in *C. pyricola*) and by the appearance of the terminal part of the female abdomen (with a noticeable constriction in *C. pyri*, with no constriction in *C. pyricola*). These structures can be seen on captured specimens by looking at the insects in profile with a hand lens.

Figure 6. Adult *Cacopsylla pyricola* (©Mark Richman, iNaturalist, CC BY 4.0)

Figure 7. Summer-form (upper) and winter-form (lower) specimens of *C. pyricola.* Females are on the left, males on the right. Photo courtesy of Rodney Cooper, USDA-ARS.

In addition to *C. pyricola*, there are more than 20 other species of *Cacopsylla* that will attack pear trees (Civolani et al., 2023), though none of them are currently present in the United States. There are also over 40 nonnative psyllids that have become established in the United States and Canada as of 2021 (Horton et al., 2021) and numerous native psyllid species that may be captured during surveys. Many of these species are small insects that fly when disturbed and have a generally similar appearance to *C. pyri*. Willow-associated species of *Cacopsylla* present in the United

States are often similar in color, size, and general shape to *C. pyricola* and *C. pyri*. Willow-psyllids are routinely collected in pear orchards at certain times of the year.

There are multiple resources to help identify captured psyllids (Burckhardt, 2010; Burckhardt and Hodkinson, 1986; Halbert and Burckhardt, 2020; Ossiannilsson, 1992). When identification remains uncertain, dissection of the male genitalia by a trained expert may be necessary (Burckhardt and Hodkinson, 1986).

Commonly Encountered Non-targets

The approved survey methods for *Cacopsylla pyri* are yellow sticky traps and beat sheeting.

These methods are non-specific and will capture a diversity of non-target species, including the easily mistaken species described in the previous section.

Biology and Ecology

European pear sucker has two to six overlapping generations per year and two distinct seasonal morphs (Civolani et al., 2023). The summer-form, which is slightly smaller with a reddish or orange hue, appears from spring to late summer. Summer-form females are sedentary, while males are more active (Wille, 1950). Winter-form adults, which are typically larger and bluish/black, emerge in late summer in response to shorter daylight hours, enter diapause (i.e., the period when reproduction and development are suspended), and disperse to overwintering sites in the fall (Civolani and Pasqualini, 2003; Stratopoulou and Kapatos, 1995). Overwintering sites include twigs at the base of pear buds, tree crevices, other fruit trees (e.g., apple, plum, or quince), or other structures in and around pear orchards (e.g., telephone or railway poles) (Priore, 1991; Wille, 1950). They typically remain motionless during diapause but can flutter around on warm or sunny days (Priore, 1991). Adults live 10-50 days in the summer and 55-70 days in winter (Kapatos and Stratopoulou, 1996; Wille, 1950).

Diapausing females emerge from overwintering sites in late winter (February-March in Europe), laying the first generation of eggs when temperatures are above 45°F. They lay eggs almost exclusively on flower buds, which are the best food resource for nymphs early in the season (Civolani, 2012; Kapatos and Stratopoulou, 1999; Wille, 1950). The minimum temperature for egg development is 35°F and, in Greece, eggs laid in winter hatch in about 1 month (Kapatos and Stratopoulou, 1999). Young nymphs of the first generation hatch in early spring and feed on the nearby flower buds. Egg-to-adult development takes about 2 months during this time (Kapatos and Stratopoulou, 1999).

The offspring of the winter-form generation emerge as the first summer-form adults of the season and the summer-form persists until late summer, with multiple population peaks (Civolani and Pasqualini, 2003; Priore, 1991; Stratopoulou and Kapatos, 1995; Wille, 1950). Adults use visual, acoustic, and olfactory cues to find mates, though the details of mate finding and courtship have not been fully clarified (Civolani et al., 2023). Once mated, summer-form females lay eggs throughout the host tree, including on

flower buds, leaf buds, and shoots (Stratopoulou and Kapatos, 1992). Eggs laid during warmer times of year require about 7 days to hatch (Kapatos and Stratopoulou, 1999) and development from egg to adult takes 20-30 days when temperatures are 60-80ºF (Kapatos and Stratopoulou, 1999; Stratopoulou and Kapatos, 1992; Wille, 1950).

Known Hosts

The host list below includes cultivated and wild plants that 1) are infected or infested by the pest under natural conditions, 2) are frequently described as major, primary, or preferred hosts, and 3) have primary evidence for feeding and damage documented in the literature. Plants are highlighted in bold if they are commercially produced and the pest causes economically significant damage.

Table 1. Preferred US hosts of *Cacopsylla pyri*.

Scientific name	Common name	Type/Use	References
Pyrus communis	Pear	Cultivated	Burckhardt and Hodkinson, 1986; Wille, 1950

Winter-form adults dispersing from host trees to overwinter will feed on non-hosts, including stone and pome fruit trees, to survive the winter (Civolani et al., 2023). None of these transient feeding hosts are listed in this section as adults rarely lay eggs on them and they do not support full development of the European pear sucker (Wille, 1950).

Pest Importance

Cacopsylla pyri damages pear in three ways: directly through feeding, indirectly by excreting honeydew, and indirectly through disease transmission of the phytoplasma that causes pear decline.

European pear sucker infestations can significantly reduce fruit weight and yield (Sanchez et al., 2022), and excessive honeydew excretions cause cosmetic damage that devalues the fruits (Civolani, 2012; Erler, 2004; Sanchez and Ortín-Angulo, 2012). Nymphs are the most damaging stage of this insect (Wille, 1950). The pest has caused up to 17% pear fruit damage in Italy (Priore, 1991). Infestations primarily impact fruit quality and tree health, which leads to a decline in productivity (Civolani et al., 2023). Adults can also transmit '*Candidatus* Phytoplasma pyri', the causal agent of pear decline, which is considered a harmful organism in Brazil, Colombia, Eurasian Customs Union, Mexico, Morocco, Paraguay, Serbia, The Republic of Korea, and Uruguay (APHIS, 2025; Carraro et al., 1998; Civolani, 2012; Süle et al., 2007).

The potential impact of *Cacopsylla pyri* in the United States could be significant as pears are an important commodity with over 500,000 tons produced yearly on over 100,000 acres (NASS, 2025). California, Oregon, and Washington are the top pear producing states (NASS, 2025). Because the US pear industry is already seriously impacted by the closely related species, *C. pyricola* (DuPont et al., 2021), it is likely that impacts to pear production and management practices would be similar for *C. pyri*.

Pathogens or Associated Organisms Vectored

Adults can transmit '*Candidatus* Phytoplasma pyri', the causal agent of pear decline as can *C. pyricola* adults. '*Ca*. Phytoplasma pyri' is in the United States.

Known Distribution

European pear sucker is present in Europe and temperate Asia (Table 2).

Table 2. Countries where *Cacopsylla pyri* is known to occur.

Continent	Country	References/Notes
Asia	China	Yang and Fasheng, 1981
	Iran	Cho et al., 2020
	Kazakhstan	Cho et al., 2017
	Türkiye	Erler, 2004
Europe	Armenia	Cho et al., 2017
	Austria	Riedle-Bauer et al., 2022
	Belarus	Cho et al., 2017
	Belgium	Bangels et al., 2010
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Tesanovic and Spacis, 2017
	Bulgaria	Arnaudov, 2016
	Czech Republic	Kocourek et al., 2021
	Denmark	Cho et al., 2017
	Finland	Cho et al., 2017
	France	Berrada et al., 1995
	Georgia	Cho et al., 2017
	Germany	Cho et al., 2017
	Greece	Kapatos and Stratopoulou, 1999
	Hungary	Jenser et al., 2010
	Italy	Pasqualini et al., 2002
	Malta	Cho et al., 2017
	Moldova	Cho et al., 2017
	Netherlands	Cho et al., 2017
	Norway	Gundersen, 2016
	Poland	Jaworska et al., 2012
	Portugal	Cho et al., 2017
	Romania	Cean et al., 2012
	Russia	Cho et al., 2017
	Serbia	Stamenkovic et al., 2001
	Slovakia	Seljak, 2006
	Slovenia	Seljak, 2006
	Spain	Sanchez and Ortín-Angulo, 2012
	Sweden	Cho et al., 2017
	Switzerland	Schaub et al., 2001

Continent	Country	References/Notes
Europe (cont.)	Ukraine	Cho et al., 2017
	United Kingdom	Nagy et al., 2008

Pathway

European pear sucker can likely spread through infested seedlings, as the closely related species *C. pyricola* was introduced into the United States on imported pear seedlings during the 1800s (Horton, 2008).

Natural dispersal primarily occurs when winter-form adults disperse from pear orchards to their adjacent nearby overwintering sites (Civolani and Pasqualini, 2003). Members of the *Cacopsylla* genus are generally weak fliers and long-distance dispersal of psyllids is wind-assisted (Hodkinson, 2009; Horton and Lewis, 1996; Maier et al., 2013).

Use the PPQ Commodity Import and Export manual listed below to determine 1) if host plants or material are allowed to enter the United States from countries where the organism is present and 2) what phytosanitary measures (e.g., inspections, phytosanitary certificates, post entry quarantines, mandatory treatments) are in use. This manual is updated regularly.

Agricultural Commodity Import Requirements(ACIR) manual: ACIR provides a single source to search for and retrieve entry requirements for imported commodities. https://acir.aphis.usda.gov/s/

Potential Distribution within the United States

Based on a comparison of plant hardiness zones (PHZ) (Takeuchi et al., 2018) where this species is known to occur and collection records exist, it could establish in the United States in PHZ 6-9. This area spans most of the continental United States, excluding mountainous areas and the most northern sections of the Northeast, Midwest, and Great plains. *Pyrus communis*, common pear, is grown throughout the United States (USDA-NRCS, 2025) and major areas of production include California, Oregon, and Washington (NASS, 2025). *Cacopsylla pyricola*, a similar psyllid introduced to the United States in the 1800s, requires similar climatic requirements and is present across the United States (CABI, 2025; Civolani et al., 2023).

Survey and Key Diagnostics

Approved Methods for Pest Surveillance*:

For the current approved methods and guidance for survey and identification, see Approved Methods for Pest Surveillance (AMPS) pest page on the CAPS Resource and Collaboration website, at https://approvedmethods.ceris.purdue.edu/.

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Versions

February 2025: Datasheet completed (Version 1)

Reviewer(s)

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