Redlegged earth mite (*Halotydeus destructor*)

**Description:** Adults are 1 mm long and have eight red-orange legs. Adults and nymphs have a velvety black body. Newly hatched mites are pinkish-orange with 6 legs and are only 0.2 mm long. Mites are active from autumn to late spring and are found in southern Australia, but not in northern NSW.

**Damage:** Redlegged earth mites are the most destructive seedling pest of canola causing a silver or white discolouration of the leaves and distortion of cotyledons. Affected seedlings become stressed and shrivel and dry out quickly and can be killed before emergence.

**Monitoring:** Check paddocks in spring and again prior to sowing.

Examine plants for damage and search for mites on leaves and on the ground from emergence to early vegetative stage. Weather conditions affect mite activity. If weather is fine estimate the numbers per leaf, if cold and cloudy estimate the numbers per 100 cm² (10 cm x 10 cm) around the base of the plants at 10 sites within the crop. Mite

*Canola damaged by Redlegged earth mites.*
damage is typically greater around the edge of paddocks, where there is higher pressure from mites invading from outside the paddock. An average of 10 mites per area warrants spraying.

Temperatures below 20 °C are required for several days before hatching in autumn/winter.

**Management:** In the previous spring before sowing canola, if high mite numbers are observed in the pasture phase they should be controlled using the TIMERITE® optimum day to spray.

Crops should be monitored regularly for mites to enable early control before too much damage occurs. A long-term residual insecticide applied post-sowing pre-emergence can be used.

**Images:** J Kudnig, Nuseed; CESAR