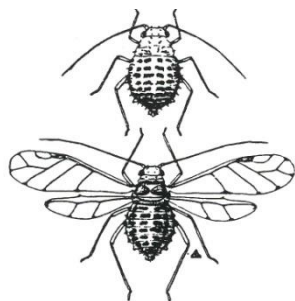


APHIDS

DESCRIPTION:



Aphids, or plant lice, are small, soft-bodied, slow-moving insects that feed by sucking plant sap. They can be recognized by the pear-shaped body and rather long antennae. Aphids vary in color – white, gray, green, brown, red, yellow, or black. They are usually found in large numbers (colonies) on the undersides of leaves or on stems. There are both winged and wingless aphids in most species. As the aphids feed, they secrete honeydew, a sweet, sticky, shiny substance seen on leaves. Honeydew consists mainly of excess sap ingested by the insect that passes through the body.

INJURY:

Aphids may damage many plants, including fruits, vegetables, and ornamental trees and shrubs. Feeding damage causes a reduction in vigor, curling, and distortion, of leaves and reduction in yield. Some species inject saliva into the plant tissue as they feed and can transmit viral diseases from one plant to another.

In addition to the direct damage caused to the plant, a black fungus, known as sooty mold, grows on the honeydew secreted by the aphids. Sooty mold is unsightly and objectionable

LIFE HISTORY:

Most species of aphids overwinter in the egg stage. The eggs hatch in the spring to produce a generation of females. These female aphids give birth to live young. Generally the first young aphids are wingless; however, when a colony becomes too crowded, winged forms may be produced. The winged forms migrate to new host plants and begin new colonies. Enormous populations are built up from these overlapping generations all summer long.

Late in the season, the aphids migrate back to the original host plant and a generation consisting of both males and females are produced. These individuals mate, and the females lay eggs that overwinter.

MONITORING:

Carefully inspect plants for the beginning of an aphid population buildup. Check for the presence of natural enemies such as mummies (gray-brown bloated parasitized aphids indicating wasp parasites at work), and the alligator-like larvae of lady beetles and lacewings.

Yellow sticky boards are also used as a monitoring tool for aphid populations. Aphids are attracted to the yellow color and are often visible on the boards before they are detected on the plant.

MANAGEMENT:

If there are high numbers of mummies or large populations of ladybird beetles or lacewings along with the aphids, additional treatments may not be necessary. Ladybird beetles and lacewings are beneficial because both the adults and larvae actively feed on aphids.

In general, controlling populations early in the season often eliminates the need for later spraying. In a few cases, however, treatment may need to be carried out all season long. Wash off aphids with water occasionally, as needed, early in the day. A hard stream of water directed at aphids will remove many from plants.

Insecticidal soap, hydrophobic neem oil, pyrethrins with insecticidal soap or systemic imidacloprid can be used for control on most plants. **Check the label for restrictions of the use on various plants.** Be sure to check the number of days you have to wait to harvest (Days to Harvest) before applying any pesticide to edible crops.

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This publication contains pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly and human errors are still possible. Some materials mentioned may no longer be available, and some uses may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold, or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension specialist or our regional DEC office. Read the label before applying any pesticide.