



Aphids

Aphids are a common garden pest that can vary in many different colours, but are usually green, black or yellow. They are small soft-bodied insects that have needle-like mouthparts to pierce plants. They can attack many plants from fruit trees to vegetables to indoor plants.



Damage

Aphids damage plants by sucking the sap from leaves, twigs, stems, or roots. This can also transfer diseases in the process. Usually you will find a cluster of them feeding under leaves or stems. They can produce a sticky substance also known as “honeydew” onto the leaves of your plant. The “honeydew” will usually attract other pests such as ants, flies or wasps due to the sweet taste. Leaves that have been attacked will have spotty yellow discolouration. Leaves may dry out, wilt or yellow. Young growth may be distorted or wilted.

Life Cycle

Aphids can multiply quickly through the seasons. Young aphids are called nymphs. They molt, shedding their skin about four times before becoming adults. There is no pupal stage. Some species produce sexual forms that mate and produce eggs in fall or winter, providing a more hardy stage to survive harsh weather and the absence of foliage on deciduous plant. They will usually lay their eggs on leaves. The females that hatch from the eggs in the spring give birth continuously without mating. They can produce up to 80 eggs a week. Aphid populations will increase quickly in the spring and summer.

Biological Control

Ladybugs are a great way to naturally eradicate aphids from your garden. They are predators both as adults and larvae, consuming about 50 aphids daily. After receiving ladybugs, they can be released right away or stored in the fridge for 3 – 4 weeks. The best time to release them is at dusk, when the bugs are least active, and the environment is not as hot/ dry. It is also a good idea to mist the area that you are going to be releasing them. You can also put a little tray of water with sugar or FLAT soda and that will make the ladybugs wings sticky to prevent them from flying away upon awakening. You can incrementally release the ladybugs throughout the span of a few weeks and keep re-introducing predators to combat your pest population. They are usually available mid-April to summer.

Mechanical Control

Spray the leaves of infested plants with a garden hose. A forceful stream of water should be enough to dislodge the aphids. Direct the stream toward the underside of the leaves, where aphids tend to congregate. Hose down your plants 1-2 times a day until the infestation starts to thin out. Plucking off infected leaves is also good precaution to take to prevent further spread.

Chemical Control

Safer's® insecticidal soap is recommended to control aphids. They leave no toxic residue, so they don't kill natural enemies (ladybugs) that migrate in after the spray. These sprays will smother the aphid. Thoroughly cover the infected area under the leaves and on top. It is a contact spray so it must be sprayed directly on the bug for it to have effect. Apply weekly for 2 – 3 weeks and thereafter repeat if needed.

apple aphid
(*Aphis pomi*)



wingless adult



winged adult

© 2013 Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

Last Update 2022-03-22

15175 - 72nd Avenue, Surrey
Tel. 604-590-2431

2560 West Broadway, Vancouver
Tel. 604-733-1534

HuntersGardenCentre.com @HuntersGdnCtr