

MEALY PLUM APHID (*Hyalopterus pruni*)

LEAF CURL PLUM APHID (*Brachycaudus helichrysi*)



Mealy Plum Aphid



Leaf Curl Plum Aphid

Mealy Plum Aphid: typical
'mealy' appearance



Colony showing winged
aphids and aphid skins.

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Description

Mealy Plum Aphids overwinter as eggs on the primary host: plum, hawthorn and sometimes on apricot and peach. They hatch in March/April and form dense colonies feeding on the underside of leaves. Winged aphids appear in summer and spread to secondary host (reeds), but many remain on plum. In autumn winged male and females appear and lay eggs on the primary host.

Leaf Curl Plum aphid has a similar life cycle. It hatches in spring and curls leaves tightly. In summer it migrates to its secondary hosts in the daisy or clover families. It is a vector of Plum Pox Virus (Sharka).

Aphids cause leaf drop and shrivelling of fruit. Honeydew spoils fruit.

Monitoring

The best indicator is orchard history: if aphids were a problem in the summer, treat in early winter or pre-bloom.

Sample for eggs during winter dormancy. Dormant spur samples are taken once a year between mid-November and the end of January to look for scale, mealy bug, mites and aphids. Collect 100 spurs at random in orchard from older wood and examine with a hand lens. The threshold for aphids is zero—if eggs are present a treatment will be necessary.

Control

A late autumn (November 1) spray to remove leaves early will help to control aphids by disrupting their lifecycle. Copper or Zinc Sulphate sprays are used.

Winter oil sprays to control scale will also control aphids but are harmful to many natural enemies too.

If winter oil is not used, spray immediately pre- or post-bloom but not during bloom with imidacloprid, acetamiprid or thiamethoxam. Do not use more than once during season. In summer, use summer spraying oil. Pirimicarb is also effective and safe to most beneficial insects.