

APHIDS



Colony of Green Apple Aphid—looks alarming but is not serious except in nursery



Ants 'farming' aphids in cucumber



Brown aphids on wheat

Ladybird larvae hunting aphids in wheat



Ladybird eggs in aphid colony



Aphid carcass after emergence of parasite



Description

(This card describes aphids in general: see cards for individual species.)

Aphid species are pests of all crops. They debilitate the crop by feeding on the sap (e.g. Grain Aphid—*Sitobion avenae*), but some species inject chemicals that distort fruit and leaves (e.g. Mealy plum aphid—*Hyalopterus pruni*), some secrete honeydew (e.g. Corn Leaf Aphid—*Rhopalosiphum maidis*) and others spread virus diseases (e.g. Peach Potato Aphid—*Myzus persicae*).

Aphids may be green, yellow, brown, red, or black depending on the species and the plants they feed on. Most species have a pair of tube-like structures called siphunculi or cornicles projecting backwards out of the hind end of their bodies. Siphunculi distinguishes aphids from all other insects. Unlike leafhoppers, bugs and most other insects, aphids do not move when disturbed.

Under favourable conditions, aphids reproduce rapidly giving birth to live females without the presence of males. Sexual reproduction often takes place when winged forms migrate to lay eggs at over-wintering sites.

Monitoring Example

Green apple aphids: Inspect new shoots during summer. Treatment threshold when 75% of terminals infested or when 2 to 3 infested leaves are found per shoot.

Control

Natural enemies are very important in aphid control. Common enemies include: ladybirds, lacewings, hoverflies (Syrphids), anthocorid bugs, parasitic wasps, fungi. Ants 'farm' aphids for the honeydew they secrete and defend them from enemies. Ant control is important—see card on ants.

On fruit trees, winter oil sprays are effective on aphid eggs.

Synthetic pyrethroids, Chlorpyrifos or Dimethoate are effective against aphids, but are not recommended for IPM as beneficial insects will be killed.