



## Aphids



Aphids (blackflies, greenflies etc. are very common pests, occurring in both winged and wingless forms. They can be found clustered together in large numbers on leaves and shoots of all fruit stocks.

### **DAMAGE**

Aphids are extremely troublesome and can cause serious physical damage that will weaken plants. They feed on sap by piercing plant tissue with their needle-like mouth parts, causing leaf distortion, stunting of the new shoots and premature fruit drop in fruits such as currants, gooseberries and blueberries. Some aphids can also carry and transmit viruses which may affect your fruit stocks and is a particular problem in strawberries and raspberries. Many species secrete an abundance of honeydew, much sought after by ants and other insects followed by 'sooty' type moulds on leaves, shoots and fruits that reduce photosynthesis.

### **CONTROL**

As it is easier to prevent than cure a severe infestation, it is important to be vigilant, checking one a week during the spring and summer for signs of aphids. Actions should be taken as soon as attacks are diagnosed and before excessive damage is caused.

#### **Non chemical Control**

**Lacewing larvae and ladybirds** feed on aphids. These populations can be increased substantially if a lacewing chamber and/or a ladybird house is installed in the garden.

**Companion Planting** - Plant yellow/orange nasturtium around the base of fruit trees to attract aphids and lure them away, or alternatively repel aphids by planting strong smelling herbs such as chives, garlic, marigold, and tansy under your trees.

**Removal** - If caught in the early stages, wash away any aphids with a sharp spray from a hose pipe, or, if you are not squeamish put on a pair of gloves and squash them between your fingers. Repeat regularly.

**Branch Wraps** – New to the market, branch wraps are great for protecting stone fruits (cherries, plums, gages, peaches, nectarines etc.) from aphids, blackfly, wasps and other harmful insects, as well as from birds. Wraps should be fitted around branches after flowering, but care must be taken to ensure that the trees are free from pests before doing so.

#### **Chemical Control**

It is important when using insecticides to only spray first thing in the morning or late evening when fewer bees are foraging. Avoid using sprays when fruit trees are in blossom as any residue could harm pollinating insects.

#### **Commercially available organic sprays**

The following sprays are derived from plants or other natural substances and although effective, will require more frequent applications than when using synthetic pesticides, as they have a shorter persistence. Working on contact, care should be taken to thoroughly spray both the top and undersides of leaves.

**Sprays based on natural pyrethrum/pyrethrins** which is derived from the flowers of a member of the Chrysanthemum genus *Tanacetum cinerariifolium*.

**Pyrol Bug & Larvae Killer** – concentrate or ready to use.  
Defenders Bug Killer

**Sprays based on fatty acids** derived from plant and animal oils.

Doff Universal Bug Killer  
Doff Greenfly and Blackfly Killer

**Sprays based on plant oils & extracts.** Plant oils include those derived from rape seed and sunflowers which block the breathing pores of aphids leaving beneficial insects such as bees and ladybirds are unharmed.

**Bug Clear For Fruit & Veg Gun**  
Growing Success Fruit & Veg Bug Killer  
Agralan Whitefly Killer  
Vitax Organic Pest and Disease Control - concentrate or ready to use

### **Compounds with a physical mode of action (not-organic)**

Based on a blend of surfactants and nutrients it controls by blocking breathing pores or gumming the pests to the leaf surface.

**SB Plant Invigorator**

### **Commercially available synthetic pesticides**

Synthetic pesticides generally give a higher level of control however care must be taken when using on edible plants in respect to the number of applications being made and the length of time that should be left between spraying and harvesting. The following synthetic sprays can be used to treat aphids on selected fruit trees, canes and bushes including apple and pear trees, raspberry canes and strawberry plants.

Westland Resolva Bug Killer (*Lambda cyhalothrin*) – concentrate or ready to use  
Bayer Sprayday Greenfly Killer (*Deltamethrin*)  
**Bayer Provado Ultimate Fruit & Vegetable Bug Killer** (*Deltamethrin*) – concentrate or ready to use.

### **Winter Tree Washes**

Aphids usually over-winter as eggs but in mild winters some adults may survive, therefore a winter tree wash is advisable. The following washes are based on natural oil based products which smother over-wintering eggs.

**Growing Success Winter Tree Wash**  
Vitax Winter Tree Wash

### **USE CHEMICALS SAFELY: ALWAYS READ THE LABEL**

When using chemicals it is most important to follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely. Only use on the fruits that are listed on the manufacturer's label. An accurate weighting machine and measuring cylinder should be obtained. Chemicals can be wasted by making concentrations unnecessarily strong or by making them too weak and ineffective. Furthermore, if chemicals are too strong they may cause some damage to the foliage.