



Woolly Aphid



The woolly aphid *Eriosoma lanigerum* is a common pest of apple trees, living in colonies on stems and branches. The adult is purplish-brown and covered with masses of white waxy 'wool', which is secreted from its body as a form of protection.

A series of generations occur during summer months. A few winged aphids are produced in July which may colonise other apple trees, but the most natural spread is by young wingless nymphs which often crawl or are blown from tree to tree. Populations decline in August but rise again in September with the production of wingless egg-laying females.

DAMAGE

During mid to late spring, the aphids are seen mainly around old pruning cuts and splits in older bark. Later in the summer they spread to young branches where they feed on sap causing soft, knobby swellings to develop.

The corky galls that often form may severely disfigure young trees. More seriously, should the galls split during frosty weather, the wounds can allow the entry of apple canker, which may kill the tree. The sticky masses of 'wool' produced by the woolly aphid may contaminate foliage and developing fruits.

CONTROL

Non chemical Control

Watch for signs of infestation during spring and early summer and if spotted treat by washing off the 'wool' with slightly soapy water and a soft brush as heavy infestations during the late summer are very difficult to control.

Woolly aphid has a number of natural enemies which helps to keep it in check, although they are not effective against heavy infestations. Woolly aphids are eaten by some ladybirds and lacewings. These populations can be increased substantially if a **lacewing chamber** and/or ladybird house is installed in the garden.

Chemical Control

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 woolly aphids on apple and crab apple trees.

Westland Resolva Bug Killer (*Lambda cyhalothrin*)

Bayer Sprayday Greenfly Killer (*Deltamethrin*)

Bayer Provado® Ultimate Fruit & Vegetable Bug Killer - Concentrate or ready to use (*Deltamethrin*)

Commercially available systemic insecticides

Systemic insecticides are absorbed into plants through the roots and/or foliage and have a longer lasting effect.

Scotts BugClear™ Ultra Gun (Acetamiprid)

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.