

## Raspberry Cane Midge



The raspberry cane midge is a widespread and serious pest of summer fruiting raspberry varieties. The midge, which is a small reddish-brown fly, does not itself cause much harm, however its larvae which are pink and grow up to 4mm in length, which cause the harm by feeding and damaging the canes opening them up to infection by diseases such as raspberry cane blight. (Please see our fact sheet on 'Raspberry Cane Blight').

Summer fruiting varieties 'Glen Moy', 'Glen Prosen' and 'Malling Jewel' are more susceptible to infestations than other varieties as their canes have a tendency to split naturally.

### **DAMAGE:**

The midges emerge from the soil at the end of May and beginning of June and lay eggs under the bark of the new canes where natural growth splits have occurred or the surface of the cane has been damaged. There may be several hundred larvae per cane. After two or three weeks the larvae drop to the ground and enter the soil at the base of the canes and pupate. Adults emerge

two to three weeks later and produce a second generation of larvae in the July or August. There is usually a third generation of larvae in September and these overwinter and pupate in the spring.

The failure of canes to break into leaf at the end of the winter and the wilting of the fruiting canes at any time between bud-burst and picking, are the obvious signs that there had been an infestation by cane midge during the previous summer. The tissue in the feeding areas will become discoloured and turn brown or black. More importantly, the feeding of the larvae enables various fungal pathogens to infect the canes. These diseases may kill the fruiting canes and thereby considerably reduce fruiting potential for the following year.

This pest does not affect autumn fruiting varieties (unless the canes are allowed to give a second crop the following summer) because the fruiting canes are cut out and burned once they have finished fruiting. This operation interrupts the life cycle of the mite before it has the opportunity to build up large populations.

### **CONTROL:**

There is no recommended method of chemical control available to the amateur gardener.

Cultivating the soil around the bushes during the winter will destroy many overwintering larvae and thereby reduce infestation levels the following year.

Cane vigour control, by which the first flush of new canes are removed gives very good control against this pest. At the end of April or beginning of May when the average height of the new canes is 10-20cm, every new cane that is on the bush can be rubbed or pulled out. Within 14 days a replacement set of canes will grow to take the place of those that have been removed. The later and weaker growing canes do not split their bark and therefore, do not provide egg laying sites for the adult midges. Furthermore the canes will not grow so tall and fruit quality will be improved, yield increased and picking made easier.