

Raspberry Leaf & Bud Mite



The raspberry leaf and bud mite *Phyllocoptes gracilis* is a widespread and often common pest of raspberries, and occasionally blackberries and hybrid berries. The mite is too small to be seen with the naked eye. It passes the winter under the bud scales and in April migrates to and feeds on the undersides of the newly opened leaves of the new and fruiting canes. Mites are most numerous in late summer and early autumn.

Outbreaks are worst where raspberries are grown in very sheltered situations near tall trees and in hot dry summers. A severe infestation gives rise to crumbly fruit, a reduced crop and stunted canes.

DAMAGE:

On raspberries, the feeding on the leaves gives rise to distortion and irregular yellow blotching on the upper surface of leaves which to the inexperienced observer can be confused with virus infection. Leaf hair development beneath the yellow patches is abnormal, the appearance of these areas changing from greyish to pale greenish. Top buds of young canes are sometimes killed, leading to the development of weak lateral shoots. Attacks on fruits cause irregular drupelet development, uneven ripening and malformation.

'Glen Prosen' and 'Tulameen' seem less susceptible than other varieties, where as 'Malling Jewel' and 'Glen Ample' are more prone to attack..

On blackberries, heavy infestations may cause Mildew blotches to develop on the upper surface of leaves, and malformation of hairs on the underside of the leaves.

CONTROL:

Unfortunately no chemicals are available to the amateur gardener for the control of this pest. It is therefore very important to buy Ministry Certified stocks in the first place to obviate the risk of importing the pest in to the garden.

Where bushes are severely attacked, the drastic measure of cutting down all the canes to ground level and burning them, but leaving their root systems 'in situ' should be taken. This means the complete loss of crop for one year but the only alternative would be to scrap the plot and replant with certified canes.

Consideration should also be given to growing an autumn fruiting variety The fruiting canes of such varieties are cut out and burned once they have finished fruiting (unless the canes are allowed to give a second crop the following summer). This operation interrupts the life cycle of the mite before it has the opportunity to build up large populations.