Thrips on Brassica

Recognize the problem
Thrips are small insects, less than 1mm in length with four long, narrow fringed wings. The immature stages are yellowish in colour. Adults are usually dark with a habit of turning up the tip of their body.
In order to feed, they pierce the plant surface causing small silver like marks. Thrips usually feed on the young lower leaf surface. Affected brassica are of poor quality but damage is more severe on seedling infestation. Thrips contaminate the plant surface with their faeces which encourages the growth of fungi.

Background
Thrips lay eggs which may survive in the soil between seasons. Thrips are killed or eaten by some insects and spiders. They do not like the smell of garlic.

Management
Non-chemical control
• Avoid planting infested seedlings to avoid pest build up.
• Conserve natural enemies such as predatory mites, predatory thrips and spiders. Avoid spraying pesticides when enough natural enemies are present in the field to reduce the number of thrips.
• Intercropping with garlic repels thrips.
• Turning the soil before transplanting is also necessary to kill the eggs in the soil from previous crops.
• Blue sticky trap attracts and kills adult thrips.
• Flooding the field, if possible, may destroy the eggs found in the soil.

Chemical control
• Uses of insecticides such as Azadirachtin (neem), Lambda cyhalothrin and Lufenuron can effectively control thrips.

Scientific name(s) > Thripidae, e.g. Frankliniella spp.

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: many countries where this pest or problem is present

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