Aphids on cucumber

Recognize the problem
Aphids are small (smaller than a grain of rice) grey or green insects that suck sap from plants. They like to feed on the young leaves and shoots and are often found on the undersides of leaves. Their feeding can cause leaves and shoots to become deformed and turn yellow. Large numbers of aphids can reduce yields. However, one of the biggest problems is that they carry diseases from one plant to another.

Background
Aphids reproduce very quickly and high numbers can develop in a short time. Virus diseases can be carried from one plant to the next when aphids feed on them. Virus diseases can be very damaging to cucumber plants and cannot be treated with chemicals. Aphids are eaten by many different types of insects such as ladybird beetles, spiders and wasps. Aphid mummies are a sign that these insects are present. The mummies are formed by the bodies of dead aphids and are light brown and bigger than living aphids.

Management
- Scout your cucumber plants for aphids every 3 days. If aphid colonies are seen on 2 out of 20 plants, then action is needed.
- If you see aphid natural enemies then you may not need to do anything.
- If you only have a few plants then aphids can be removed by gently rubbing the young shoots and leaves with your fingers to squash the aphids.
- Old crops should be quickly destroyed to reduce aphid movement and the spread of diseases to healthy crops.
- Dissolve a handful of soap powder in 5 liters of water then add two spoonfuls of frying oil. Spray the plants fully, including the undersides of the leaves. Wait 15 minutes then spray the plants with water to wash off the soap.
- If the crop is heavily infested then a chemical insecticide like alpha-cypermethrin can be used. Apply following the instructions on the label. Monitor the crop after spraying. The latest spraying date is 10 days before harvesting.

Scientific name(s) > Aphis gossypii, and others

When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.