

Aphids

Recognize the problem

Aphids are delicate, pear shaped, soft bodied insects with long legs and antenna. They are usually green, yellow, dark or black in colour with or without clear wings. They are found in small groups on the underside of leaves. They affect many crops such as cabbages, tomato, passion fruit and mango. They suck plant sap which makes leaves coil, wrinkle or cup giving plants a deformed shape. In the feeding process they release a sweet sticky substance called honeydew, which falls on to leaves and allows a black mould to grow there. This black mould blocks light from reaching the plant and this will slow the plant's growth.

Close up of aphid. (Photo by Kengap Horticulture)



Background

Aphids can also live on other plants or weeds. Natural enemies such as ladybird beetles, lacewings and hoverflies eat or kill the aphids. Aphids do not like the strong smell of some plants.

Management

Non-chemical control

- Grow strong smelling plants such as onion, garlic or parsley to keep away the aphids.
- Encourage high numbers of ladybird beetles, lacewings and hoverflies. Do not spray insecticides when numbers of these are high enough to reduce the aphid population.
- Spray affected plants with a mixture of soap and water. This washes off aphids and disturbs their breathing.
- Yellow sticky traps can be used to monitor and kill aphids.

Chemical control

- Use insecticides such as Azadirachtin, Bifenthrin, Deltamethrin, Lambda - Cyhalothrin and Pirimicarb.

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.

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: China, Kenya



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