

Whiteflies

Recognize the problem

Whiteflies are small insects about 1-2mm long. They are mostly found on the underside of leaves. They hold their wings somewhat roof-like, over the body. They feed on the plant leaf, which causes them to turn yellow and curl. They also release a sticky substance called honeydew which makes leaves appear shiny and sooty (black). They also spread disease-causing viruses.

Background

Whiteflies can survive on lots of different plants, including crops such as tomato, cabbages and mango. Soapy water spray suffocates whiteflies and makes the plant slippery, so they get washed off. Neem products inhibit growth and development of immature stages, repel whitefly adults and reduce egg laying.

Management

Non-chemical control

- Keep the fields weed free to avoid the pests sheltering there.
- Natural enemies like the parasitic wasp *Encarsia formosa*, lace wings, big eyed bugs and minute pirate bugs are effectively used for control.
- Spray the affected crops with mineral oils and a mixture of soap and water.
- Remove infected plants and plant parts, like the leaves, to avoid pest build up.
- After harvest uproot entire plants and destroy crop debris by burning to destroy their eggs.

Chemical control

- Effective insecticides for control include Bifenthrin, Buprofezin, Deltamethrin, Lambda cyhalothrin and Pymetrozine. Spray on the underside of the leaves.

Note: Deltamethrin, Lambda cyhalothrin will also harm natural enemies.

White flies on cabbage leaf. (Photo by Kengap Horticulture)



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.

Scientific name(s) > *Bemisia tabaci*; *Aleurodicus disperses*; *Aleurocanthus woglumi*

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



Authors: This factsheet is based on information written for "The Brassica Farming Handbook", first published by KENGAP Horticulture, 2011.
Kengap Horticulture Ltd, P.O Box 12898-00400 Nairobi, Kenya
tel: +254 722 575544; +254 723 491549 email: books@kengap.co.ke;
www.kengap.co.ke

Edited by Plantwise.