Recognize the problem
Aphids, also known as plant lice, are small 1-5 mm long, soft-bodied, pear-shaped insects. They pierce the stems and leaves to suck out plant fluids. This makes leaves curl or wrinkle which leads to stunted and deformed growth of the plant. Aphids may be green, yellow, brown, red or black. They are often found in groups on the underside of leaves. Aphids prefer beans, cucumbers, pumpkins, tomatoes, potatoes and cabbages.

Background
Instead of chemical pesticides, chilli sprays can be used to kill aphids. The chilli (mpili mpili-in Nyanja) contains compounds that kill the aphids by attacking their skin and disturbing their breathing. Take action when you see an average of 2-5 aphids per plant because aphids can multiply rapidly, with each adult female giving birth to up to 12 offspring per day. Once aphid numbers are so high that they have begun to distort and curl leaves, it is often hard to control them. This is because the curled leaves shelter aphids from treatment and natural enemies.

Management
- Crush 1 kg ripe fresh hot chillies (= 40-50 small fruits)
- Soak them in 2 litres of water in a 5-10 litre bucket for 24 hours at room temperature
- Then sieve the chilli-water mixture using a fine sieve or a clean empty mealie meal sack
- Add half a cup of liquid soap (or 3 tablespoons of washing powder dissolved in 50 ml of water) to the chilli solution just before spraying
- Use the solution immediately as the solution loses power over time, so cannot be stored for later use
- Use a knapsack sprayer or spray bottle to spray the affected plants. This can be done once a week.
- Spray your plants thoroughly, making sure you also cover the underside of the leaves, using a dilution of 300ml/20 litres. This will cover an area of 10m X 100m (1000 metres squared)
- 24 hours after the spraying check the aphid level, to see if the spraying was effective.

Scientific name(s) > **Aphidae, e.g. Brevicoryne brassicace**, 

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Zambia

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Edited by Plantwise

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