Aphid control in cabbage

Recognize the problem
Cabbage aphids look like small lice on plants. They can reduce cabbage farmers' income by decreasing the quality and damaging up to 90% of their crop.

Background
Aphids are sucking insects that suck the juices from the leaves and tender shoots of plants. They can change the shape of the leaves causing the leaf to curl and can also spread diseases from plant to plant. There are different types of aphids but the usual type that affects cabbage is gray.

They live on young leaves and in the centre of the cabbage heads, making them difficult to control. Their number grows rapidly in cool and dry weather.

Management
- Inspect your plant regularly for aphids. If the infestation is not too bad, you can remove the infested leaves and destroy the aphids or it may be possible to leave the leaves on the plant and squash the aphids on the leaf surface.
- Yellow sticky traps and yellow water pan traps catch aphids.
- Intercropping with Basil (Petite Bum) keeps numbers down.
- Apply good cultural practices such as weeding and using correct planting distances to promote vigorous plant growth.
- Practice crop rotation – alternate with crops not from the cabbage family such as beans or pumpkin.
- Biological control – lady birds eat aphids and so should not be controlled.
- You can spray the plants using dishwashing liquid (1 tsp/gallon) water in the morning or late in the evening. This will reduce the numbers but will not be as effective as the chemicals below.
- Chemical control – apply Diazinon or Lambda cyhalothrin, this will provide a rapid kill of the pest, but there is a need to be repeated if the pest returns. Be warned that lambda cyhalothrin can also kill natural enemies such as ladybirds.

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) > Brevicoryne brassicae

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Grenada

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Edited by Plantwise

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