APHIDS

Order - ***Homoptera***
Family- ***Aphididae***

There are more than 1300 species of aphids in North America, including many that are associated with and may damage garden and yard plants. They are all small –not usually exceeding 1/12-inch, but reproduce prolifically and become abundant. Most aphids reproduce sexually and develop through gradual metamorphosis. They can also develop through parthenogenesis in which offspring are produced without mating. These aphids may bear live young. The life span of an adult is approximately one month. Sexual maturity is reached in four to ten days.

Aphids put plants under stress by feeding on the sap from the phloem tissue. Infested plants become covered with honeydew secreted by the aphids and discolors foliage, further stressing the plant by reducing photosynthesis

COTTON APHIDS OR MELON APHIDS*

These aphids are some of the most common aphids. They feed of a wide variety of plants. Some include asparagus, beans, begonia, catalpa, citrus, clover, cucurbits, cotton, ground ivy, gardenia, hops, hydrangea, okra, spinach, strawberries, tomatoes, violets, and weeds.

OLEANDER APHIDS*

This aphid infests oleander, butterfly weed and builds up on the terminal growth. In most cases many of the oleander aphids themselves become infested with a parasitic wasp. *Lysiphebus testaciepes (Creeson) (Hymenoptera: Braconidae*). Infested aphids swell, turn brown and die. The wasp cuts a hole in the aphid's abdomen to emerge.

GREEN PEACH APHIDS*

Also known as tobacco or spinach aphid has a wide range of host plants including lettuce, peach, potatoes, spinach, tomato, and other vegetables and ornamental crops (flowering and bedding plants including chrysanthemums).

CRAPEMYRTLE APHID*

Specifically infests crapemyrtles. They can be found on host plants throughout the year, but appear to build up in higher numbers during the hot summer months. Crapemyrtles were originally inported from Asia, and these aphids came on the plants.

GREENBUG*

Are found on wheat during the winter months and sorghum during the spring and summer, but also on Johnsongrass, other wild grasses and sometimes on oats.

NON TOXIC CONTROLS

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1. Learn your beneficial insects like parasitic wasps (they can't sting people). These wasps lay eggs inside the abdomen of the aphids and when it is born, it emerges from the aphids belly. Look at pictures of Lacewings, Leatherwings, and baby ladybugs, they look just like red and black alligators. One ladybug will eat 5000 aphids in its lifetime.

2. Plant flowers that attract beneficial insects to your garden. The adult forms of many beneficials feed on the pollen of the these plants—so have a wide variety available.

3. You can always wipe off or prune away the leaves and buds to clear out colonies of aphids.

4. Using a forceful stream of plain water works really well. The aphids are knocked off the plant and usually ends up breaking their jaw when they hit the ground. Really!! They are also very slow movers, so even if they did manage to get back up the plant, they can't eat again.

5. If you must "use" something, try an insecticidal soap. It kills aphids on contact, but doesn't leave any toxic residues that could harm beneficial insects. They can be used on food crops as well. If you want to be 100% sure of saftey try, a mix of 1-3 teaspoons of household soap (not detergent) per gallon of water.

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