Vegetables

APhIDS ON VEGETABLE CROPS

Common Name - Bean aphid
Pea aphid
Melon aphid
Cabbage aphid
Potato aphid
Others

Scientific Name -
Aphis fabae Scop.
Macrosiphum pisi (Harr.)
Aphis gossypii Glov.
Brevicoryne brassicae (L.)
Macrosiphum solanifolii (Ashm.)
Several species

Description - Aphids are small, soft-bodied insects found singly or in clusters on stems or undersides of leaves. Cabbage aphids are green to gray or powdery blue, potato aphids pink to green, melon aphids green to black, pea aphids green and bean aphids almost black. These aphids vary in size. The largest is about 1/6 inch long, and the smallest is barely visible.

Life history - Aphids winter as eggs and adults. The tiny aphids hatch in the spring, mature rapidly, and give birth, without mating, to living young. Mature aphids fly to cultivated crops during the spring and summer, where they start new colonies. Only females are produced during the summer, and with their rapid rate of reproduction it is possible for enormous numbers to develop in a short time.

As cool weather approaches in the fall, both males and females are produced. The females then mate and lay fertile eggs that go through the winter.

Damage - Aphids attack the leaves, stems, blossoms, pods, and other parts of their host plants, sucking plant juices through their tiny needle-like beaks. Heavily infested plants become stunted and do not produce normal crops. Migrating aphids also transmit several important plant diseases.

Control - Several natural enemies help to keep aphids under control. The lady beetle is a conspicuous example. Diseases also destroy many aphids during warm, damp weather. For insecticide recommendations for vegetable crops, see U. of I. Circular 897.

Prepared by entomologists of the Illinois Agricultural Extension Service and Illinois Natural History Survey. For additional copies, see your county farm adviser.

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