

APHIDS

Description:

Commonly called greenfly, blackfly.

Detection:

Check the undersides of leaves, new shoots and buds for an oval shaped insect which grows to about 3mm long with disproportionately long legs and antennae; some species also have wings. Aphids may be green, pink, brown, white, black, yellow, red or grey. They live in small colonies or groups and often have white "shells" (cast-off skins) scattered among the living insects. Aphids suck out juices from the plants, causing stunted growth, and distortion of buds and leaves which if left untreated will cause the affected area to curl and die. They also excrete sticky honeydew that could attract a black sooty mould. The more difficult aphids to detect feed from the roots.

Control:

Remove as many as possible by hand with a soft brush then swab the leaves with a soapy cloth and then rinse with water. A tough plant may be rinsed with the garden hose paying particular attention to the underside of the leaves. There are several sprays available but the more 'friendly' soapy approach will be just as effective.

Biological control methods are available for aphids.