

How to deal with aphids

Description:

The most common aphids are greenfly and blackfly but there are several other species commonly causing plant problems.

Detection:

Check the undersides of leaves, new shoots and buds for an oval shaped insects which grow 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 leads to a secondary infection of black sooty mould. The more difficult aphids to detect feed from the roots.



Control:

Non-chemical 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 containing pyrethrins that are readily available but the more 'friendly' soapy approach will be just as effective.

Companion planting is also an effective cultural control. For Example, planting Marigolds alongside broad beans will reduce the numbers of blackfly which damage this vegetable crop.

Biological control:-

The biological control most useful when dealing with these pests is ladybird larvae. Adults can be attracted to your garden by giving them overwintering habitats from which they will emerge in the spring when the aphid population becomes active. Natural biological control methods are available to buy to combat aphid attacks.

Chemical control:-

There are several suitable chemical methods of controlling these pests. Care must be taken when choosing chemical controls regarding where they are appropriate for use.

Provado Ultimate Bug Killer – active ingredient thiacloprid – is one. It is not suitable, however, for use on some fruit crops.

For fruit and vegetable crops **Plant Rescue** from Westlands – active ingredient is a micro-emulsion – is available.