

# Aphids

Aphids are small pear-shaped insects (Image 1) that can be found in many colors such as green, yellow, red, gray and black (Images 2,3,4). They feed by sucking sap from buds, leaves, twigs and developing fruit, often in dense groups (Image 3).

Adult aphids are usually wingless but can form wings when populations are high, when food source deteriorates, or in the fall. They have many generations per year, often seen together (Image 3). Some lay eggs to overwinter, others can give birth to live young (Image 5) in times of plenty or under stress. There is no pupal stage and can reach reproductive stage in as little as 8 days.

Sap passes through the body and is ejected out the rear of the body. This material is called “honeydew” and is very sticky. A sign of aphids is sticky material found dripping off plants onto cars, patio furniture and more. Honeydew can become black with sooty mold fungus. Another sign can be the presence of ants (Image 4) which will protect the aphids, because they eat the honeydew.

Lady beetles eat aphids (Image 6) so their presence in high numbers can indicate aphids. Lady beetle nymphs (Image 7) can be kind of scary but they also eat aphids so they are a benefit.

## Control

Control of aphids can be done with many products. Many are contact sprays so those need to be sprayed on all parts of the plant, top and bottom (underside of leaves). Because many beneficial insects like to eat aphids, always spray very early in the morning (before 8 am in most cases).

The BEST spray for aphids is the **ferti•lome® “Green” Label Spinosad Soap**. This combination of Spinosad and insecticidal soap makes it one of the best choices for aphid control. It is a natural product so is great for vegetables!

Next would be an oil, either **ferti•lome® “Green” Label Triple Action** or **ferti•lome® “Green” Label Horticultural Oil**. Oils are suffocants and thorough coverage is required. These will kill all stages of the aphid and are natural products as well.

**Hi-Yield® Garden & Farm Insect Control** offers a contact kill and a residual that can last up to 10 days.

Finally there are systemics. Depending on the size of your plant, **ferti•lome® Tree & Shrub Drench** can work for trees and most plants. For houseplants or small plants **Hi-Yield® Systemic Insect Granules** is your choice.

