

Aphids

Aphids feed on a wide variety of plants in Texas. They have high reproductive capabilities so their populations can grow to large numbers quickly.

Aphids are small, soft-bodied insects that come in a variety of colors. Some have wings while others may not, but all have cornicles, or “tailpipes” that come off the tip of the abdomen.

Aphids have piercing-sucking mouthparts which they use to pierce plant tissue and suck out the juices. Damage often appears as yellowing or curling of foliage. Aphids also secrete a sweet, sticky substance called honeydew. Honeydew often appears on the plant as a shiny spots or sometimes the honeydew may have sooty mold growing on it. Sooty mold is a black fungus that can block sunlight from reaching the plant leading to a decrease of photosynthesis.



A hint that you may have aphids is that you see ants trailing on the plant. Many species of ants will tend aphids for the honeydew.



Some ideas for managing aphids are as follows:

- Encourage natural enemies such as parasitoids (that create aphid mummies), ladybugs, lacewing larvae & syrphid fly larvae; know what these creatures look like so you don't kill them
- Use high pressure water sprays to dislodge aphids from the plant
- Less toxic pesticides include active ingredients such as insecticidal soap, azadirachtin (neem), horticultural oils or d-limonene
- Other pesticides to manage aphids may include active ingredients such as permethrin, acephate (non-food items only), carbaryl or imidacloprid

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Extension or the Texas A&M AgriLife Research is implied.

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.