Garden Center and Nursery
2000 E. Prospect Road
www.bathgardencenter.com
(970) 484-5022

Aphids

Aphids are soft-bodied, plump, have long spindly legs, are often wingless and have cornicles. They have a piercing-sucking mouthpart that is adapted to feeding on plant sap.

Aphids excrete honeydew, a clear drop of liquid found on foliage, vehicles or whatever is below the aphids. Honeydew is colonized by a group of fungi know as sooty mold. Sooty mold is primarily an aesthetic problem, but a heavy population of sooty mold can interfere with photosynthesis. Aphid feeding may cause leaf curl or distortion on new, emerging foliage.

Many aphid species have a primary host plant – usually a deciduous tree – at the beginning of the season. Over the season they will have secondary host plants. Inspect your trees for large populations of aphids.

Life Cycle

Winged females lay eggs on the primary host in the fall, then die. In spring, the eggs hatch to be wingless females. When they mature, wingless females give birth to another generation of wingless females (asexual reproduction.) After several generations of wingless females, crowding occurs, and likely triggers a chemical cue that leads to a hormonal response within the population and a generation of winged females is produced. These winged females venture to find another suitable host plant and repeat the process.

Management

- Employ beneficial insects in your garden – ladybugs, lacewing larvae, praying mantid and more.
- Don't use chemical sprays to control aphid infestations, they may kill beneficial insects.
- Spray infested plants with a strong jet of water to knock aphids off the foliage. Aphids are usually too weak to return to the plant.
- Use an organic pesticide containing Neem oil.
- Aphids are attracted to new growth. Avoid synthetic, high-nitrogen fertilizers that cause quick, weak growth.
- If an infestation has reach the point of leaf curling, a systemic insecticide is necessary. Aphids inside the curled leaves cannot be spray. A systemic insecticide is watered into the root zone, then transported up the plant. As aphids feed on the foliage they ingest the insecticide.