



PEST OF THE MONTH

April

Aphids

Aphids can appear quickly and can cause significant problems in the garden in a very short time. There are hundreds of species of aphids. They have round, almost pear-shaped bodies with two small “tail pipes”, called cornicles, on their abdomen from which they secrete honeydew. Aphids feed on plant sap, sucking life, so to speak, out of plants. They extract nutrients from plants, which affect the growth. Aphids also carry plant diseases and viruses, which transmit from plant to plant. Effects on plants are browning of leaves, wilting leaves, mottled leaves, yellowing, stunted growth and mold which grow on the secreted honeydew.

Aphids range in size from 1-4mm in length and can have a variety of colors from black, brown, pink, green or almost colorless.

Aphidoletes is a gall midge that naturally occurs in North America.

Aphidoletes are mainly active at night, at which time the females deposit their eggs right inside the aphid colonies. After only 2 to 3 days the eggs start to hatch into larvae and immediately start to feed on the aphids around them. Aphidoletes larvae look like reddish-orange “maggots”. So please don’t squish them or spray them.... They are eating your aphids! Aphidoletes is sold in the pupae stage mixed with vermiculite. For the best application keep the container in your house or greenhouse until the first flyers are seen. Then take the container close to the aphid colonies, open the lid and leave the container there for 2-3 days until they all fly out.

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