



PEST OF THE MONTH

June

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. 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.

Ladybugs are general predators, feeding on mites, scales, mealybugs and soft-bodied insects, but their favorite meal is the aphid. Ladybugs hibernate in the winter months and tend to go inactive during the hottest parts of the summer. They are very vigorous feeders in Spring and Fall, which coincides with the highest aphid populations of the year. Spraying plants with water before releasing ladybugs allows them to have a drink right away and helps to keep them in the area longer. Once their food source is gone, they will fly to find another batch of food. Don't be too concerned about adult ladybugs flying away, because they lay many eggs and the voracious hungry larvae can't fly!

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