

Natural enemies of aphids in vegetable crops - what to look out for

In **outdoor vegetable crops** the most important natural enemies of aphids are lacewings, hoverflies, ladybirds and parasitoid wasps. Typically some or all of these can be found in the crop shortly after aphids arrive, as long as disruptive pesticides have not been applied.

In **protected vegetable crops** these beneficial insects can also turn up naturally, but often there are too few or they arrive too late to provide control. Consider introducing parasitoid wasps as soon as aphids are detected.

When monitoring, look out for the eggs of predators, and if aphids are present, look for signs of parasitised aphids. Take note from one week to the next of the relative numbers of aphids and beneficials, before deciding whether chemical support is necessary.

Selective aphicides can be applied to support biological and cultural controls, if necessary. IPM Technologies can provide assistance when it comes to deciding whether a spray is necessary, and which product is most suitable.

It is important to select the product that will cause minimal disruption to the full range of beneficials that are working to control pests in your crop.



Parasitoid wasp (3mm) inserting egg into aphid



Parasitised aphids (2mm)



Adult brown lacewing (10 mm)



Brown lacewing eggs (1 mm)



Juvenile brown lacewing (10 mm) feeding on an aphid



Adult hoverfly (10 mm)



Hoverfly eggs (1mm) laid amongst a colony of aphids



Juvenile hoverfly (8 mm) on left, beside aphids and juvenile brown lacewing



Adult ladybird (5mm)



Adult hoverfly (10 mm)



Adult hoverfly (10 mm)