

Aphids on soft fruit

GWF448

Updated February 2009

Commonly known as greenfly, these small insects form clusters, particularly on young shoots. Some types are a serious pest on soft fruit.

Currants, blackberries, gooseberries, raspberries, and other hybrid berries can all suffer from aphid attacks. Aphids may damage shoots and fruiting ability, as well as spreading plant viruses.

Q Which aphids attack currants?

A Three aphids commonly affect currant bushes:

Blackcurrant aphids (*Cryptomyzus galeopsidis*) are greenish-white, live on the undersides of leaves and cause little apparent damage. However, they do excrete a lot of sticky honeydew causing both the leaves and fruit to become covered in the sooty mould that grows on it.

Currant-sowthistle aphids (*Hyperomyzus lactucae*) are green and attack young leaves, particularly on blackcurrants, causing yellowing and distortion.

Redcurrant blister aphids (*Cryptomyzus ribis*) cause puckering in the leaf centre, which on redcurrants and whitecurrants turns bright red, and on blackcurrants may turn yellow.

Q How do I control them?

A Aphids overwinter as eggs on currant bushes and start to feed on the leaves as soon as they open in March and April. You need to start checking in early

spring, and spray with an insecticide containing thiacloprid or any others approved for use on soft fruit if colonies begin building up. This is important on blackcurrants where aphid damage to shoots will quickly affect fruiting ability. These aphids all migrate to other plants in June.

Q Which aphids affect gooseberries?

A There is only one aphid of any significance: the **gooseberry aphid** (*Aphis grossulariae*). It's grey-green in colour and infests young shoot tips in spring, causing minor distortion.

Q How do I control gooseberry aphid?

A If necessary, spray the aphids with an insecticide containing thiacloprid or any insecticide approved for use on soft fruit.

Q Which aphids affect raspberries?

A There are two species to be concerned about; they also affect blackberries and hybrid berries:

Large raspberry aphids (*Amphorophora idaei*) are shiny yellow-green.

Small raspberry aphids (*Aphis idaei*) are powdery grey-green. Both infest young shoots and can cause leaf curl.

Q How do I control them?

A They become active as early as March, so check shoot tips and spray colonies with an insecticide containing thiacloprid or any others approved for use on soft fruit. Raspberry aphids can spread very debilitating viruses, so control the smallest outbreaks.

Q Should I take steps to prevent aphids?

A If aphids are a regular problem and you do not have virus-resistant varieties, then it may be necessary to spray more often.

Q Are there any varieties resistant to aphid attack?

A 'Autumn Bliss', Glen Moy', 'Malling Admiral', 'Malling Delight' and 'Malling Jewel' show some resistance to aphids.