

Whitefly

Greenhouse whitefly (Trialeurodes vaporariorum)

Damage:

Whiteflies are mainly pests in covered systems, and can build up rapidly in warm weather. Sooty black mold will grow on the insects' sugary exudates, and they can also transmit viruses as they feed.

Identification:



Whitefly live under the leaves and have four life stages--eggs, nymphs, pupae and winged adults. Yellow sticky traps are essential to detect early infestations. If you see a whitefly on a leaf, there will be hundreds more you haven't seen. Heavy infestations are followed by black sooty mold on leaves.

Spread:

Whitefly populations grow exponentially faster as the weather gets warmer. Only adults have wings, and while they are not strong fliers, they can be dispersed with wind.

Control:

Plant production	Nurseries must control whiteflies carefully because they are virus vectors, and they typically do so with insecticides. If sourcing plug plants, inspect them careful to make sure they are free of insects.
Pre-flower	In outdoor crops, WF are rarely a problem. Risk is higher when retaining second year plants or sequencing crops without an empty-greenhouse break. Use yellow sticky traps to monitor for adults early, especially in covered systems. Encarsia parasitoid wasps control whiteflies well when released early.
Flowering and fruiting	Resistance to insecticides is a real problem, and resistance levels depend on historic insecticide usage in your region. After flowering begins, there are fewer insecticide options due to residue limitations.