

PEST OF THE season

Few insect pests have the ability to do more damage – faster – than the tiny aphid. Several different species of aphid are found in vegetable brassica and lettuce crops in New Zealand but they all share some important characteristics.

Feeding on sappy new growth, aphids not only disfigure and damage seedling vegetable plants but also transmit disease.

In fact they are one of the main vectors for the spread of costly viruses like lettuce mosaic virus.

If they become well-established in a crop like lettuce, they can render the crop unmarketable at maturity, because the heart of the plant is totally infested.

Aphids have the ability to multiply extremely rapidly, which is one of the reasons they can pose such a challenge for growers.

They can develop seven or more generations in a single year, do not always need both sexes present for reproduction, and give birth to both live young (when conditions are good) or in some species eggs that can remain dormant (when conditions are less than ideal).

Preventing populations from becoming established is the most important step growers can take.

For vegetable brassicas and lettuces, Nuprid® 350SC is a systemic imidacloprid insecticide that can be applied to seedling plants just prior to cell transplant stage for long-lasting protection from aphids.

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