

# WHITEFLIES<sup>3</sup>

## Damage symptoms

Leaves turn yellow and eventually drop off. If infestations are heavy, growth is reduced and plants may wilt. In some cases only the veins of the leaves remain green. Some whitefly species secrete honeydew, leaving a shiny residue on the leaf. Sooty mold may grow on the leaf surface. Some whitefly species transmit viruses (see page 41).

## Plants commonly attacked

Poinsettia, hibiscus, lantana, geranium, gerbera, verbena, and other bedding plants.

## General characteristics

Adults are about  $\frac{1}{8}$ <sup>th</sup> inch long with white wings. Eggs are tiny and laid on the undersides of the leaves, often in a circle. Immatures are oval, flattened and are a translucent white or yellowish color. Early immature stages crawl about the leaves looking for a suitable feeding place, but later stages are non-mobile. The shape of the pupal stage is used to identify the species. Two common species are the silverleaf whitefly and greenhouse whitefly<sup>3</sup>.

**Mouthparts:** Piercing/sucking

## Where to find whiteflies

Adults will fly around if leaves are disturbed. Immatures are on the undersides of leaves. Especially note the appearance of the white powdery material - a significant indicator of the pest's presence.

## Management

- ✓ Accurate species identification is important for effective control.
- ✓ Several methods of biological control (parasites, predators, and fungi) are available.
- ✓ Biorational insecticides are available.



*Bemisia tabaci* (sweet potato whitefly)

<sup>3</sup> Several species are greenhouse pests: *Bemisia argentifolii* (silverleaf whitefly) and *Trialeurodes vaporariorum* (greenhouse whitefly) [Homoptera: Aleyrodidae].

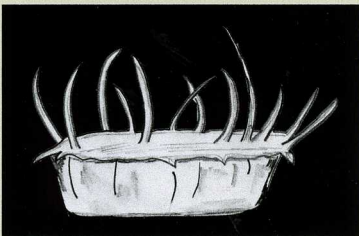
# WHITEFLY SPECIES DIFFERENCES



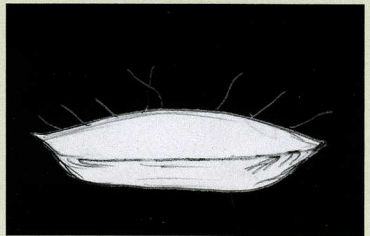
*Adult greenhouse whiteflies hold their wings flat and parallel to the leaf.*



*Silverleaf whitefly adult. Adults hold their wings roof-like over their body.*



*Greenhouse whitefly pupa.*



*Silverleaf whitefly pupa*