

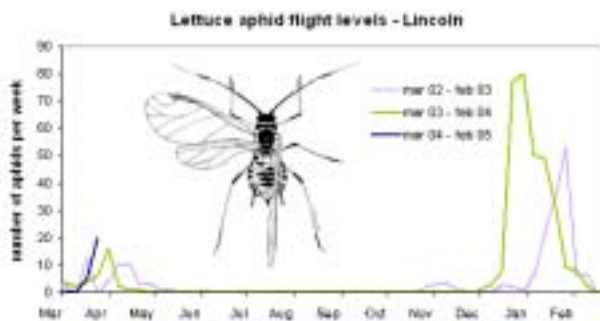
Lettuce aphid

The arrival of the lettuce aphid, (*Nasonovia ribis-nigri*), on Australian soil is certainly the biggest issue currently confronting the Australian lettuce industry.

The trip to Tassie

During early March, Tasmanian growers were concerned about aphids in the lettuce that were difficult to control with foliar applied insecticides. Mid March the aphids were identified as Lettuce Aphid

The current theory of how they arrived in Tasmania is that they were carried by an unusual weather event in late January. That event had consistent easterly airflows from NZ to Tasmania and onto the mainland. Rain was also associated with the event. The timing also coincided with a peak of winged aphids recorded in New Zealand suction traps.



What to look for

The Lettuce aphid just looks like another aphid! The winged adults look very similar to Green Peach Aphids. The wingless Lettuce Aphid is yellow green with stripes on their back. The best identifying characteristic for growers is the Lettuce aphid's habit to be hidden in leaf curls or folds and deep within the lettuce heart. All other aphids found in Australian lettuce are usually found on the outside wrapper leaves.

Lettuce aphid is manageable

The current situation

- All other Australian states and territories have been surveyed to a protocol. **No** aphids sampled were lettuce aphid, (*Nasonovia ribis-nigri*).
- Only pre-packaged, lettuce mixes are being allowed onto the mainland, after meeting a decontamination protocol.
- An emergency use permit for Confidor® 200sc insecticide has been extended to all states. **APVMA permit number - PER7416.** Growers may be pleased with this outcome however there is still much debate between state agencies about the merits of this decision.

Management

- Soil or seedling drenches are the most common form of control in the USA and New Zealand.
- Chemicals alone are not a long-term solution as lettuce aphid is likely to develop resistance.
- *Nasonovia* resistant lettuce varieties are available for some growing slots. Many fancy lettuce types are available, whilst there are only a few heading lettuce varieties..

Rijk Zwaan and South Pacific Seeds have commercial lines of *nasonovia* resistant lettuce varieties. Hendersons Seeds also have a resistant head lettuce variety. Terranova seeds have recently crossed the resistance gene into their lettuce lines and are probably a year or so from having commercial seed available. See attachment

For more information contact Sandra McDougall
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Confidor® Warning

The current emergency use permit for Confidor® 200sc insecticide in Australia lists a rate of 35-55ml of product per 1000 plants. **APVMA permit number - PER7416.**

Rumors are currently circulating that lower Confidor® rates are being used in New Zealand with effective control. **TRUE, But the whole story is not being told.**

The Confidor® product in New Zealand is 350g active ingredient whereas a 200g active ingredient formulation was registered in Australia to give it an S5 poison schedule, rather than an S6.

Any growers thinking of using a Confidor® drench are strongly urged to have read and understood the Australian permit. PER7416

Victorian update

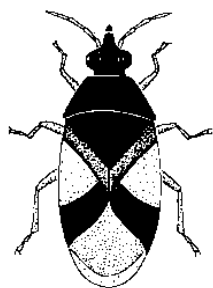
Slobodan Vujovic, DPI Knoxfield

In the Melbourne metropolitan growing regions (Cranbourne and Werribee South) the end of the lettuce season is approaching. Many growers in Werribee South had to cut back (50% to 70%) on their normal production of lettuce, some growers planted their last lettuce crop as early as December. This was due to the drought with growers receiving less than half of their water allocation on top and the ban on groundwater use. Cranbourne growers started the lettuce season with close to full dams but now due to the lack of rain their dams are very low. East Gippsland had a good season although severe water restrictions were imposed by late summer/early autumn and some crops may have been affected by lack of water.

Pest pressure has been relatively low this season in Victoria. *Helicoverpa armigera* have become active (low to moderate) since the beginning of February till present in both Werribee and Cranbourne. Helicoverpa pest pressure rose very late in the season in East Gippsland but nothing like normal levels although crops still required monitoring to maintain control.

In East Gippsland there was aphid pressure early in the season with Cucumber Mosaic Virus and Lettuce Mosaic Virus a problem. Aphids and thrips have been active since mid March in lettuce crops in all regions and TSWV was also around in East Gippsland. There was a lot of beneficial activity in crops with a soft chemical program. **IPM was successful** in these crops with predatory thrips, syrphids, brown lacewings, ladybird beetles and pirate bugs active.

Growers who planted lettuce this season had a very good year, low pest pressure, good weather (not many hot days) and good prices.



Pirate Bug



2 mm

- A beneficial insect, very small
- Black in colour with light wing patches
- Eats thrips, caterpillar eggs & small larvae

Sclerotinia management

Symptoms

- Wilting, browning of leaves and eventual lettuce death.
- Small black balls, (sclerotia), can be seen at the base of the lettuce, with white hyphae.



Management

- Minimise plant damage at transplanting and thinning.
- Apply a registered fungicide after transplanting or thinning.
- Avoid disturbing the soil after this chemical application.
- Seedlings can be dipped in fungicide prior to transplanting.
- Biocontrol is possible with antagonistic fungi like *Trichoderma.sp.*
- Rotation with non-host crops e.g. cereals.
- Deeply incorporating crop residue after harvest is useful.

For more information contact Andrew Watson
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Lettuce conference

Accommodation Scarce

The 3rd Australian Lettuce Industry Conference will take place at Werribee, Victoria from the 3rd - 5th May 2005, overlapping with the biennial Werribee Expo.

International guest speakers, water use efficiency, IPM, marketing issues and with the recent arrival of the lettuce aphid makes attending the conference a must.

Given a major event at the National Equestrian Centre in Werribee will be competing for local motels on the same dates as our conference. Our advice is to **book early!** For more information and local accommodation options please contact Andrew Creek.

For further information contact: Andrew Creek, NSW Agriculture, Ph (02) 6951 2653, Fax (02) 6951 2692
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