Department of Primary Industries and Regional Department

Primefact

Black peach aphid and green peach aphid

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Kevin Dodds, Development Officer – Temperate Fruits, Batlow, NSW
Jessica Fearnley, Development Officer – Temperate Fruits, Orange, NSW

Black peach aphid (*Brachycaudus persicae*) and green peach aphid (*Myzus persicae*) can be significant pests of stone fruit, attacking leaves and shoots, reducing crop potential and causing fruit quality issues.

Pest identification

Adult black peach aphids (BPA) can be winged or wingless, are shiny, black and about 2 mm long. Nymphs are reddish-brown.

Green peach aphid (GPA) nymphs are pale yellowish-green and have 3 dark lines on the back of the abdomen. Mature aphids are pale green or pinkish and about 2 mm long (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Wingless adult female and nymph stage green peach aphids.

Damage

GPA is a particular concern because of its role in transmitting plant viruses. Aphid infestation can cause leaf and shoot tip distortion. Aphids feed on the leaves, extracting sap and causing leaves to turn yellow and drop. Honeydew produced by a heavy infestation during the growing season can result in sooty mould developing on the tree and fruit.

Monitoring

Check leaves and new growth for BPA and GPA infestation weekly from budswell to ripening. Aphid numbers can increase quickly, therefore regular inspections are important during the first half of the growing season.

Management

Cultural and physical: avoid excessive amounts of nitrogen fertilisers as these promote soft plant tissue growth that is favoured by aphids. Prune out water shoots and control weeds around the orchard as these can act as a reservoir for migrating aphids.

Biological: natural biological predators of the aphids include lacewings and lady beetles. The activity and efficiency of biological control agents will be influenced by the absence of insecticides that are likely to be toxic to them. To maximise the effect on beneficial insects, avoid using broad-spectrum insecticides, particularly in spring and summer. In cool growing regions, GPA can overwinter as eggs around the buds. In the lead-up to budburst, eggs and newly hatched nymphs are susceptible to oil sprays applied to control San José scale.

Chemical: check the APVMA PubCRIS database for registered controls (https://portal.apvma.gov.au/pubcris).

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