

Cotton aphid (exotic species)

What is it?

Cotton aphids (*Aphis gossypii*) are world-wide pests of cotton and a range of other commercial plant species, including melons and citrus. Cotton aphids impact cotton production as they:

- produce honeydew which contaminates the cotton lint
- reduce yield through feeding activities
- introduce and spread pathogens, such as the exotic cotton blue disease

Cotton aphid also develops resistance to insecticides, making control difficult. There is a risk to Australian cotton production if insecticide resistant clones or aphids carrying exotic disease entered the country and become established in cotton regions.

What does it look like?

Cotton aphids are small insects, varying in colour from pale green or yellow through to dark brown and almost black. They typically have two short projections from the rear end (siphunculi) that look like exhaust pipes. Infestations are often associated with deposits of shiny honey-dew on the leaves.

What can it be confused with?

Exotic species can be easily confused with endemic species already present in Australia. Any aphid that does not respond to treatment or attacks crops not normally affected by aphids should be reported immediately.



Lewis Wilson, CSIRO Australia

Cotton aphid (*Aphis gossypii*)



UC Statewide IPM Project
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Cotton aphid population, showing examples of projections from the rear end (arrows)



COTTON
AUSTRALIA

Compiled by Lewis Wilson
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Lewis Wilson, CSIRO Australia

Leaf coated with aphid honeydew (left)



Ivan Bonacic, INTA

CLRDV-infected cotton plant with the intense green-blue leaf colour which gives blue disease its name. The plant is also severely stunted and has abnormal growth habit.



Phillip Roberts, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org
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Sooty mould on open cotton from aphid infestation

What should I look for?

Indicators of exotic aphid clones could be poor control with registered insecticides. Symptoms could also be seen as patches of plants infested with aphids that show unusual symptoms indicating the possible presence of an exotic aphid borne disease such as blue disease.

How does it spread?

Aphids can be spread as hitch-hikers on nursery plants. In addition, aphids can walk (non-winged form) or fly (winged form) between plants. Long distance movement can occur when assisted by wind currents.

Where is it now?

A range of exotic aphid clones that are a threat to the Australian cotton industry are found in the USA, South America, SE Asia and Africa.

How can I protect my farm from Cotton aphid?

Check your farm frequently for the presence of new pests and unusual symptoms. Make sure you are familiar with common cotton pests so you can tell if you see something different.

If you see anything unusual, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881



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