



Greenhouse Pest Message, August 25, 2022
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Much needed rainfall arrived this week in many parts of the state. As you know, spider mites have loved the hot, dry summer. See [June 20, 2022](#) message for more on two spotted spider mites.

Poinsettia Scouting Tips

Thrips Damage on Poinsettias

Thrips feed by piercing plant cells with their mouthparts and feeding on the exuded plant juices. This collapse of plant cells results in deformed leaves. Silvery flecked scars may be seen on the expanded leaves. Poinsettias are not a favored host of thrips; however, they may migrate from outdoors into the greenhouse. Poinsettias are also not susceptible to tospoviruses vectored by thrips. Their feeding damage is not visible by the time the plants are ready for sale.



Figure 1: Thrips scarring on poinsettia leaves. Photo by L. Pundt

Here you can see a grower using biological controls against whiteflies:



Figure 2 & 3: Blister packs and cards containing host specific parasitic wasps for use against *Bemisia* whiteflies. Photos by L. Pundt

The cards or blister packs contain the host specific parasitic wasp *Eretmocerus eremicus* (released against the sweet potato whiteflies). Parasitized sweet potato whiteflies turn light tan or brown. Adult *Eretmocerus* females also kill whitefly nymphs by host feeding. Whitefly nymphs appear desiccated. Canadian researchers have found in greenhouses using biological controls that the more susceptible B biotype is capable of displacing the more resistant Q biotype in greenhouses using biological controls, which is good news for those of using biological controls for whitefly management.

Canadian researchers also have developed a presence/absence sampling plan for their growers using biological controls. Check 15 to 20 plants per block or bench, for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of the blocks in your greenhouses. Look on the underside of as many leaves as possible, holding plants above your head, and rate the entire plant as **with whitefly or without whiteflies. (Yes or No)**.

Add up the number of infested plants and divide this by the total number of plants sampled to determine the % of infested plants. It's helpful to break this down by the varieties you grow. Often, white, variegated, or pink varieties tend

to be more infested with whiteflies. They have light colored foliage which seems to be more attractive to the whiteflies than the darker foliage common with the red varieties grown today.

Canadian consultants use the general rule of thumb, that if fewer than 20% of your plants are infested with whiteflies by mid-September, you can continue using biological controls, but if more than 20% are infested, and it's the main variety you grow, spot treatments with compatible insecticides will be needed.

For more: The Tipping Point for Whitefly Control in Poinsettia

<https://onfloriculture.com/2018/09/25/the-tipping-point-for-whitefly-control-in-poinsettia/>

For photos see **Tips on Scouting Poinsettia Insect and Mite Pests**

<https://uconn.sharepoint.com/sites/CAHNRExtension/Shared%20Documents/IPM/Greenhouse/01Tips%20on%20Scouting%20Poinsettia%20Pestsfinal2017.pdf>

If you are using conventional controls against whiteflies and using yellow sticky cards to monitor for whitefly adults, now is the time of year you may see banded winged whiteflies on your sticky cards.

Banded Winged Whiteflies migrate into greenhouses from outdoor weeds such as ragweed, beggar-ticks, and velvetleaf during the end of August through September. These native whiteflies are more grayish in color than greenhouse or sweet potato whiteflies. Look for the two grayish bands that form a zig-zag pattern across each front wing of the banded wing whitefly adults. They usually do not become a pest of poinsettias. When scouting, you may occasionally find immature stages on one or two plants. Just keep track of the sweet potato or greenhouse whiteflies when checking your sticky cards.



Figure 4: Banded winged whitefly on sticky card, Photo, L. Pundt

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