

## Whiteflies

Family Aleyrodidae

### Symptoms & Damage

- Yellowing leaves and stunted plant growth
- Honeydew secretions leading to sooty mold
- Premature leaf drop
- Weakened plants more susceptible to diseases

### Cause

- Small, sap-sucking insects that feed on the undersides of leaves.
- Thrive in hot, dry weather and on stressed plants.
- Reproduce quickly, with overlapping generations during the growing season.

### Prevention & Cultural Controls

- Monitor plants regularly and inspect leaf undersides for early detection
- Use reflective mulches and yellow sticky traps to deter and monitor whiteflies
- Maintain plant health with proper watering, spacing, and avoiding excess nitrogen
- Remove and destroy heavily infested plant parts quickly

### Treatment Options

- **Organic Solutions**
  - Insecticidal soaps or neem oil to kill adults and nymphs without harming beneficial insects
  - Beneficial predators (ladybugs, lacewings) or strong water spray to physically remove insects
- **Chemical Treatments**
  - Imidacloprid (systemic insecticide) or other neonicotinoids as soil drench
  - Pyrethroids (contact insecticides) or insect growth regulators for resistant populations
- **Best Time to Treat**
  - Early morning or evening when insects are less active, and early in infestation before populations explode
  - When nymphs are most vulnerable ("crawler" stage) and during cooler seasons with lower reproduction rates

### Plant(s) Affected

- Hibiscus, gardenia, lantana, verbena, poinsettias, roses, azaleas, rhododendron, fuchsia, hydrangea, salvia

### Additional Notes

- Resistant to most insecticides, especially eggs, requiring thorough coverage of leaf undersides for effective control
- Can transmit plant viruses between plants; different life stages may need different treatment approaches

