

Currant-lettuce aphid

What is Currant-lettuce aphid?

Currant-lettuce aphid (*Nasonovia ribisnigri*; CLA), also known as lettuce aphid, is a serious pest of lettuce, endive and chicory.

This pest attacks host plants at all stages of development and is primarily a problem because the colonisation of the inner leaves (and hearts of lettuce) render the product unmarketable. Due to this behaviour, CLA does not impact on fancy lettuce to the same extent as traditional head lettuce varieties.

CLA is also known to transmit Cucumber mosaic virus and Lettuce mosaic virus.

What does it look like?

Adults (2-3 mm in length) have long legs and a spindle-shaped body, and may be present in either a winged or wingless form. Colouration of CLA is dependent on the host plant species, ranging from yellow to green, through to pink to red.

What can it be confused with?

In the field, CLA is difficult to distinguish from other *Nasonovia* species. Be observant of the pest response to control programs.

What should I look for?

Colonies of CLA may be visible on infested plants. However, CLA prefers to feed while hidden in the centre of host plants (particularly lettuces), and are generally found on the underside of leaves.

Affected lettuce leaf symptoms include leaf curling, stunting, blistering and abnormal colouring. Under heavy insect loads, lettuce hearts fail to form or die. Sticky honeydew can also be seen in leaves leading to sooty mould growth.



A wingless adult Currant-lettuce aphid

Whitney Cramshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org



The winged adult has narrow dark bands on the abdomen

Whitney Cramshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org



A colony of aphids at varying growth stages infest the underside of a leaf

Whitney Cramshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org





How does it spread?

Movement of winged adults in wind currents over relatively wide areas is the predominant means of dispersal for CLA. Movement can also occur with infested plant material.

Where is it now?

CLA is found in Europe, North America, South America, New Zealand and all states of Australia.

How can I protect my farm from Curreant-lettuce aphid?

Maintain good farm hygiene practices to reduce the risk of introducing the aphid onto your property or into greenhouses. Once CLA is introduced it is difficult to eradicate.

Control volunteer lettuce/chicory plants and wild hosts (e.g. speedwall, prickly lettuce) on your property and plough in heavily infested lettuce crops as soon as possible.

If CLA becomes established on your farm, the pest can be managed through integrated pest management schemes and the use of resistant varieties. Chemical control is difficult due to the location of the aphid on plant material.



Stephen Ausmus

CLA colouration is dependent on the host plant



Whitney Cramshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

Light banding is present on the legs, antennae and body of the aphid



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Leaf distortion of lettuce caused by CLA infestation

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