

CONTROLLING APHIDS IN YOUR GARDEN
From *Currents Vallejo Sanitation & Flood Control District*

Most plants can tolerate low to moderate numbers of aphids without noticeable damage. On some plants, however, large numbers of aphids can distort foliage and flowers and stunt plant growth. Some species of aphids can also transmit plant diseases when they puncture plant tissues to feed.

Aphids excrete “honeydew,” a sweet substance that forms a harmless but sticky coating on leaves. The honeydew is soon colonized by a fungus called “sooty mold,” which is also harmless, but makes leaves look black and dirty. Argentine ants love to feed on honeydew, and to ensure a continuing supply, they protect aphids from their natural enemies. When this happens, aphids management must include ant management.

Detection: Aphids are very small insects with soft, pear shaped bodies. They have long legs and antennae, and most have two tube-like structures called cornicles on their hind end. Adults of some species have wings. Aphids can be many colors and are usually on buds or the undersides of leaves.

Tolerate Some Aphids: Tolerate low to moderate numbers of aphids as long as they aren’t causing noticeable plant damage. There is a reason for this: aphids have many natural enemies such as spiders and ladybugs that help your garden.

Prevention: Use slow-release fertilizers like compost. Avoid excessive pruning because it stimulates aphid-attracting growth. Control ant by spraying or painting a 4” wide sticky barrier around woody shrubs or trees.

The information about aphids on this page is taken from “Controlling Aphids in your Garden,” one of the many fact sheets available from Our Water, Our World, a regional program supported by Bay Area storm water programs, including the Vallejo, Sanitation & Flood Control District. [www:OURWATEROURWORLD.ORG](http://www.OURWATEROURWORLD.ORG)