



Effect of aphids on corn yield

Overview

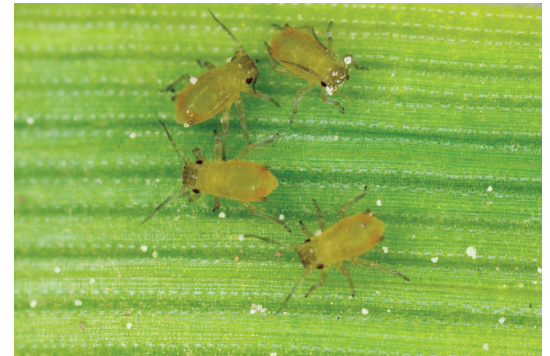
Corn aphids are becoming a common pest for corn growers, with the potential to develop into massive populations. Aphids can be found throughout the corn-growing season, but post-pollination corn aphids are a relatively new issue. It's important to understand the damage aphids cause to determine if management is needed.

What you should know

- Aphids feed on the sap from the plant phloem and excrete sugar-rich honeydew that covers the plant and can interrupt both plant growth and pollination. Aphids colonize deep within the whorl. Excessive feeding within the whorl before tassel emergence leads to incomplete kernel development or barren ears.
- Aphids are problematic during tasseling and can colonize corn later in the summer, threatening yield potential. Drought-stressed corn plants also can be sensitive to aphid feeding.
- Beneficial insects, such as ladybugs, can help control aphids.

Action steps

1. **Spot damage:** Heavily infested plants are discolored and stunted with wilted, curled or yellowed leaves and, sometimes, shriveled ears.
2. **Scout:** Start scouting three weeks before tasseling. Check five locations within the field and 20 plants at each location. Examine the ear, leaves and stalk.
3. **Control before tassel emergence:** Protect yield by controlling aphids two to three weeks before tassels emerge. Treat plants if 50 percent are infested with colonies of over 75 aphids per plant.
4. **Manage late-season:** Treat if more than 50 percent of the tassels are covered with aphids and their honeydew, before pollination is halfway complete.



Bird cherry-oat aphids are yellow-green or dark green in color and have round bodies.



30-Second Summary

- Aphid infestation can lead to significant yield loss in corn.
- Aphids can populate quickly and cause extensive damage.
- Post-pollination aphids can cause particular problems late-season.
- Scout and treat fields before tasseling to prevent costly damage.

NOTES:

For more information, contact:



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