

Pest Profile



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Common Name: Sweetpotato Whitefly

Scientific Name: *Bemisia tabaci*

Order and Family: Hemiptera, Aleyrodidae

Size and Appearance:

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg	0.21 x 0.096 mm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pearly white when first laid but darkens over time oval in shape and somewhat tapered towards the distal end distal end becomes dark brown just before the first nymphal instar ecloses
Larva/Nymph	0.27 – 0.66 mm (1 st -4 th instars)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> flattened and oval in shape whitish green (first instar) greenish-yellow (second-fourth instars) second-fourth instars are immobile with atrophied legs and antennae
Adult	0.96 mm (female) 0.82 mm (male)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> soft and whitish-yellow when first emerge within a few hours, their two pair of wings become iridescent white due to the deposition of a powdery wax
Pupa (if applicable)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> red-eye nymphal stage is sometimes called the “pupal stage”)

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Piercing - sucking

Host plant/s: The host plants include vegetables and field crops. In certain areas of the country, Florida for example, sweetpotato white fly is a major pest of tomato, peppers, squash, cucumber, eggplant,

beans, watermelon, and cabbage. Potato, soybean, and cotton are among the field crops heavily attacked by the sweetpotato whitefly.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults):

Adults cause direct damage by sucking sap from a host plant, causing sap loss and injury to plant tissue. This results in spotted leaves, yellowing, or death of the leaves. As they feed, they produce honeydew. In lower leaves covered with honeydew, a black sooty mold may grow, obscuring the leaf and reducing photosynthesis. Sweetpotato whiteflies also cause plant damage by vectoring several plant diseases. In tomatoes, they can transmit the tomato yellow leaf curl virus and tomato mottle virus.

References:

Cranshaw, W. (2004). *The Ultimate Guide to Backyard Bugs: Garden Insects of North America*. Princeton University Press.

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