

Pest Profile



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Common Name: Silverleaf Whitefly, Poinsettia Whitefly

Scientific Name: *Bemisia argentifolii*

Order and Family: Hemiptera, Aleyrodidae

Size and Appearance:

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg	0.21 x 0.096 mm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• oval• tapered towards the distal end• pearly white when first laid, but darkens over time
Larva/Nymph	0.27 – 0.66 mm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• light greenish yellow color• 2 distinct yellow spots on the abdomen
Adult	1.0 mm (females) 0.8 mm (males)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• slightly more yellow body than other whiteflies• wings are white iridescent appearance and held close to the body
Pupa (if applicable)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• teardrop shape and flat

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

Host plant/s: Silverleaf whiteflies feed upon a wide range of plants including a number of vegetables, field crops, and ornamental plants. Some vegetable crop hosts include tomato, potato, broccoli, cabbage, and several cucurbits. Some field crop hosts include peanuts, soybeans, and cotton. Ornamentals that are hosts of the silverleaf whitefly include chrysanthemums, poinsettias, and hibiscus.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults):

Nymphs and adults both feed on sap from the phloem on the underside of host leaves. The saliva they inject while feeding can also cause a wide array of toxic effects in host plants. The saliva may cause the foliage of certain cucurbits to become silver in color due to the detachment of the upper leaf epidermis from the tissue beneath it. The saliva may also lead to bleaching of roots and stems of broccoli and carrots, or yellowing of lettuce leaves. Their feeding may also lead to other physiological disorders such as the irregular ripening of tomatoes. The photosynthetic ability of the plant and the aesthetic value is reduced by the sooty mold grown from the honeydew deposited. In addition to these types of damage, silverleaf whiteflies may also cause indirect damage to host plants by vectoring a number of different geminiviruses.

References:

Cranshaw, W. (2004). Garden insects of North America: The ultimate guide to backyard bugs Princeton University Press.

Mcauslane, H. J. (2009, April). *Bemisia tabaci* (Gennadius) or *Bemisia argentifolii* Bellows & Perring. University of Florida. Retrieved from http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/veg/leaf/silverleaf_whitefly.htm