

Preventive Tactics

In addition to insecticides, some preventive tactics may help reduce aphid problems. Early planting was thought to allow soybeans to escape or delay aphid population buildup and virus disease. However, results have been inconsistent. Additionally, early planting encourages bean leaf beetle colonization and subsequent bean pod mottle virus infection, so adjusting planting date should be considered carefully before implementation.

Planting seed of resistant plants may also be a future option. Currently, there are very few varieties that are resistant to soybean aphids



Soybean aphid colony with shed skins (white) and fungus killed aphids (brown).

but more resistant varieties are being tested in the Midwest and are expected in 2009. These resistant varieties dramatically reduce soybean aphid populations but do not produce aphid-free plants. The resistance is plant derived, not transgenic, and therefore will not require a refuge. Resistant varieties can be planted in certified-organic production systems. It is not yet clear if they can be left untreated with insecticides to achieve optimal yield. Field scouting for aphids is still suggested if growers decide to plant an aphid resistant soybean variety. More resistant soybean varieties are expected in the near future.

