



## **Mealy Bugs (Cryptolaemus) – Instructions for use**

Several species of mealy bug appear in greenhouses, conservatories and atriums, the most common being citrus mealybug (*Planococcus citri*). They tend to favour slow-growing or perennial plants. Their bodies are covered in dusty white wax filaments, making them difficult to control with chemicals. Like aphids, mealybugs weaken plants by sucking the sap and produce a sticky deposit (honeydew) on which black fungal growth develops.

The ladybird predator, *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri*, can be used to control a wide range of mealy bug species. The adult is about 4mm in length with a dark brown body and orange head. The larvae are covered in mealy white projections, making them resemble their prey, but grow larger, up to 13mm in length. *Cryptolaemus* will also feed on aphids and scale insects when necessary.

When to treat - May to mid-September as soon as mealy bugs are detected. The beetle is not active below 18°C. *Cryptolaemus* is most active in sunny weather.

How to treat - Supplied as adult beetles. Release in the evening onto infested plants. Keep the vents closed. The life cycle depends strongly on temperature, taking about 32 days from egg to adult at 24°C. Apply 2-3/m<sup>2</sup> or 2-5 beetles per plant if infestations of mealy bug are high. Ants will protect mealy bug and reduce the effectiveness of the predator unless controlled.

Storage - Use as soon as possible after receipt, alternatively the unopened bottle may be stored in the dark at 10 -15°C for 1-2 days.