



# Common Plant Pests: How to Get Rid of Them

by Noboa Tropicals



# THRIPS

“Run, don’t walk”



## What are thrips?

Thrips are tiny, slender insects that range in color from translucent white to yellow or black. Thrips multiply fast and can greatly affect almost all plant parts like leaves, stems, flowers, and fruit. At one point, they will invade your soil to pupate. They also fly!



## How do they affect your plant?

Thrips munch on leaves, flowers, and stems, causing discolored dry patches. Look out for distorted growth, curled leaves, leaf drop, and a general decline in plant health as thrips multiply. Spotting them early is the secret to preventing *major* damage.

## How to get rid of them?

- Place [yellow sticky traps](#) around your plant (top to bottom). This will attract and trap the adults. Isolate the affected plant.
- Sprinkle [diatomaceous earth](#) on the soil and leaves to disrupt their life cycle. **Note:** DE is ineffective when wet. Also, it can affect beneficial insects, so apply with care.
- For infestation, spray plants with [non-toxic insecticides](#) or use as a soil drench.
- Add allies like [beneficial insects](#) to control population. Quick action is *crucial!*

# APHIDS

“They are quite good at what they do”



## What are aphids?

Aphids, also known as plant lice, are tiny insects with soft bodies, usually ranging from green to yellow or brown. These small pests have pear-shaped bodies and long antennae. Aphids reproduce rapidly and pose a significant threat to your plants.



## How do they affect your plant?

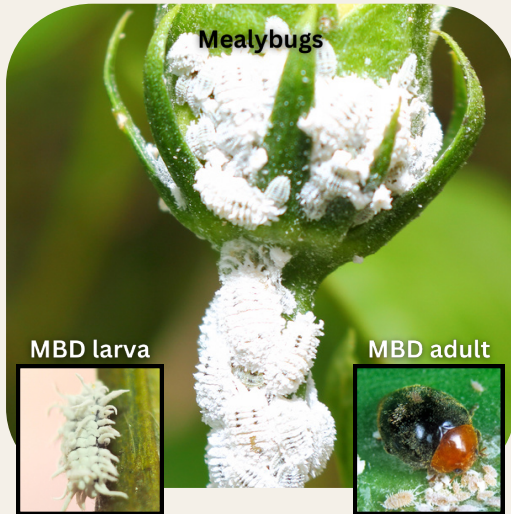
Aphids feed on plant sap, leading to weakened and distorted plant growth. One of the noticeable signs of an aphid infestation is the sticky honeydew they excrete, fostering the growth of sooty mold and attracting other pests like ants, flies, and wasps. Leaves may dry out and curl.

## How to get rid of them?

- Using a [high-pressure sprayer](#), spray them off the plant with water
- Sprinkle [diatomaceous earth](#) on the soil and leaves to disrupt their life cycle. **Note:** DE is ineffective when wet. Also, it can affect beneficial insects, so apply with care.
- For faster results, apply [non-toxic insecticides](#) to your plants.
- For large plant collections, introduce [natural predators](#) to control the population naturally.

# MEALYBUGS

“They’ll be back”



## What are mealybugs?

Mealybugs are soft-bodied pests with a distinctive white, cotton-like ball appearance that can be found wandering among your plants.

Not to be confused with the larva of mealybug destroyers (*MBD* or *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri*), which are beneficial insects.



## How do they affect your plant?

Mealybugs snack on plant sap, damaging and weakening your plant, causing yellowing and leaf drop.

They also excrete a sugary substance known as honeydew, which attracts ants and creates an environment conducive to the growth of sooty mold.

## How to get rid of them?

- Using a [high-pressure sprayer](#), spray them off the plant with isopropyl alcohol.
- Apply pure neem oil or [insecticidal soaps](#) to disrupt their life cycle. Continue treating weekly until they're gone.
- Sprinkle [diatomaceous earth](#) on the soil and leaves to disrupt their life cycle. **Note:** DE is ineffective when wet. Also, it can affect beneficial insects, so apply with care.
- For large plant collections, introduce natural predators like [mealybug destroyers](#) or [green lacewing](#).

# SPIDER MITES

“Sneaky little things”



## What are spider mites?

Spider mites are tiny arachnids that form fine silk webbing on plants. These pests, often barely visible to the naked eye, thrive in warm and dry conditions. Spider mites belong to the Tetranychidae family and can come in various colors, such as red, green, or brown, depending on the species.



## How do they affect your plant?

Spider mites feed on plant sap, causing stippling and tiny yellow dots on leaves. Rapid reproduction results in silk webbing that diminishes the plant's appearance, interferes with photosynthesis, and weakens the plant, causing discoloration, premature leaf drop, and increased susceptibility to diseases.

## How to get rid of them?

- Using a [high-pressure sprayer](#), spray them off the plant with water.
- Apply pure neem oil or [insecticidal soap](#) to disrupt their life cycle. Continue treating weekly until they're gone.
- Sprinkle [diatomaceous earth](#) on the soil and leaves to disrupt their life cycle. **Note:** DE is ineffective when wet. Also, it can affect beneficial insects, so apply with care.
- For infestation, apply a [non-toxic insecticide](#) to finish them off. Follow label instructions and repeat as necessary.

# FUNGUS GNATS

“there’s at least one flying around”



## What are fungus gnats?

Fungus gnats are tiny winged intruders that love to flutter around your potted plants. Sporting slender bodies and delicate wings, these pests lay their eggs in the soil, and when the larvae hatch, they indulge in a not-so-friendly feast on organic matter and plant roots.



## How do they affect your plant?

Adult fungus gnats do not damage plants, but the larvae feed on the roots and can cause stunted growth, wilting, and an overall decline in plant health. The feeding activity of the larvae in the soil disrupts the plant's ability to absorb nutrients, leading to stressed and weakened plants.

## How to get rid of them?

- Fungus gnats thrive in moisture, so keeping your soil on the drier side can help evict these unwanted guests.
- Place [yellow sticky traps](#) around your plant to trap the adults.
- Sprinkle [diatomaceous earth](#) on the soil and leaves to disrupt their life cycle. **Note:** DE is ineffective when wet. Also, it can affect beneficial insects, so apply with care.
- Use a [non-toxic insecticide](#) as a soil drench.

# SCALE

“So annoying”



## What are scales?

Scales are flat pests that have a protective covering (either soft or armored). They are immobile, wingless, and legless during adulthood. You can find them in various colors, including brown, white, or black, depending on the species. They are often found attached to the stems, leaves, or undersides of leaves.



## How do they affect your plant?

Scales feed on plant sap causing yellowing, deformed leaves, and eventually leaf drop. They excrete honeydew which can attract ants and create conditions for the growth of sooty mold, further diminishing the plant's health and aesthetics.

## How to get rid of them?

- Remove them manually with a cloth or Q-tip soaked in rubbing alcohol.
- Apply [insecticidal soap](#) directly onto the scale. Try to get them during the nymph stage, because their adult shell will make it difficult to eliminate.
- Sprinkle [diatomaceous earth](#) on the plant to disrupt its life cycle. **Note:** DE is ineffective when wet. Also, it can affect beneficial insects, so apply with care.
- For large plant collections, introduce [natural predators](#).



# Consistency is Key to Eliminating Pests

Happy plants = Happy life!

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