



Fact Sheet #2 in a series brought to you through the efforts of the Palm Beach County Whitefly Task Force

Task Force Website: <http://www.pbcgov.com/coextension/horticulture/whitefly/>

Whitefly Blog Archives: <http://palmbeachcountyextension.wordpress.com/category/whitefly/>

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Biology and Lifecycle ~ The life cycle for the three whiteflies ranges from 21 to 30 days during the summer and longer during the cooler winter months. The adults usually deposit eggs on the undersides of host plant leaves. The silverleaf whitefly's eggs are deposited in a circle, but only the rugose spiraling whitefly deposits eggs in an obvious, telltale spiral pattern. Whiteflies feed by inserting their needle-like mouthparts into the plant tissue. Both the immature and adult whiteflies will feed on the plant. Immature whiteflies do not look like the small, moth-like adult. Only adults have wings and can fly. The immature stages are not mobile, typically oval in shape and can be very flat to somewhat convex.

Identification of the stages in whiteflies' life cycles is critical to achieving good control. Both the immature and adult whiteflies can cause damage to a plant through their feeding activities. The egg stage of the life cycle is not damaging to the plant. Adult whiteflies may still deposit eggs on a plant that has been treated with insecticides. This does not mean that treatments are not working, or that damage is occurring. In the case of a systemic insecticide, whitefly populations will be controlled when the juveniles emerge and begin to feed.

A secondary problem caused by whiteflies is that they produce a clear, sticky substance called honeydew. Sooty mold will grow on the honeydew and create a sticky, black mess on the plant and surrounding area. The rugose spiraling whitefly also produces huge amounts of a white, fluffy substance that is primarily made of wax. This substance also becomes sticky from the honeydew and can make the plants and surrounding areas, including pools, very messy.

Remember, the label is the law; be sure to use products only in a manner consistent with the manufacturer directions on the labels.

Please use pesticides safely.

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