

Sugar beet aphids

Myzus persicae, the peach potato aphid, is the principal vector of virus yellows (see separate sheet) and, therefore, the most important aphid pest of sugar beet, even though colonies rarely attain great size (unlike those of *Aphis fabae* - see below). By mid-July it has usually disappeared from the crop.

Nymphs and wingless adults are usually light green, though reddish nymphs appear occasionally. The winged adults are dark green and, to the naked eye, may appear almost black



Macrosiphum euphorbiae, the potato aphid, is usually one of the first aphids to arrive in the crop. This gives it potential importance as a vector of Virus Yellows because the earlier plants are infected the greater the loss in yield. However, colonies are usually small and it is a much less efficient vector than *Myzus persicae*. Consequently, it ranks below this species in its importance to sugar beet growers. Winged and wingless adults, and nymphs, are usually light green. The adults are larger and have longer legs than *Myzus persicae* but young nymphs of the two species are almost indistinguishable



The black bean aphid, ***Aphis fabae***, is not a vector of BMV, the most common of the viruses that cause virus yellows (though it can transmit BYV), and it arrives into the crop later than the species above. However, it can occasionally be a serious pest. Colonies in mid summer can become very large, with thousands of individuals. Such large populations are sufficient to weaken plants significantly, and even kill them. However, if water is not limiting, plants that survive can quickly compensate for losses after the aphid population crashes.



Winged aphids of many **other species** land in the crop and some may produce nymphs. However, for most, sugar beet is not a favourable foodplant and the winged aphids soon move elsewhere. Nymphs may not survive long, and those that do are unlikely to produce large colonies. The feeding of some species (e.g. *Aulacorthum solani* and *Myzus ascalonicus*) can distort the growth of young seedlings – see picture.



Damage caused by feeding of *Myzus ascalonicus*