

October 27, 2021

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Aphids of October

By: Stanton Gill

With the arrival of the cooler weather, we are seeing activity of an aphid, *Uroleucon leonardi*. This aphid is specific to composite flowers. I got an email this week with this aphid on rudbeckia, but it can be on other composites. Check your plants for this aphid. Systemic such as Altus works well. Stylet blockers such as Aria and Endeavor work well.

Going Into 2022

By: Stanton Gill

Charlie Hall, Economist, Texas A and M University, presented last week via Zoom on the horticulture industry, its impact economically, and where he feels it may be going. First off, he mentioned that the horticulture industry contributes over \$341 billion into the US economy, which is a staggering amount.

He did point out the big limiting factors for the horticulture industry going into 2022 are rising prices of pots, substrate, greenhouse plastic covering, plant plug and seed costs, and labor costs.

Most of the rising costs in 2021 were passed along to customers. In 2022, these continuing increases will have to be passed along also if your business is to remain viable and profitable. We will see how customers react to these increases. I would be slightly cautious in increasing your production in 2022.

In 2021, there was a major shortage of cut flowers due to the problems in shipping by air and shipping port problems. The shortage of truck drivers also contributed to the distribution problems. In addition, Covid-19 ravaged the field work force in central and South America over the last year. Shipping looks like it will not be resolved until the second or third half of 2022, so cut flower growers should continue to do well through early spring.

Marigolds in Fall?

By: Stanton Gill

Back when I started my career, Will Healy, who was an Extension Floriculture Specialist with the University of Maryland, dragged me along in a project to look for alternative plants for the horticulture industry for fall planting. Will Healy was looking for a plant that could be added to the standard list of fall flowering crops including chrysanthemum, pansy, and ornamental cabbage and kale. He had the forward-thinking idea of using marigolds as a fall crop. For years, this group of flowering plants has been associated with summer flowering

plants. It turns out that it does very nicely with the cooler fall weather and really comes into its own with outstanding flower displays in October. It stays in flower up to the first real hard frost.

In our trials, Will Healy planted many different cultivars. I evaluated the plants for fall insects that might be potential problems on this crop as my part of the project. We found several excellent cultivars for fall flowering. We started plants in August and grew them to market size in late summer to early fall. We evaluated them from September through early November for two years. They look great and thrived as the weather cooled in late September to through October. The trouble was this plant was associated by most people as a summer annual, not a fall crop. There really was not a good audience willing to see marigolds as a fall crop, and we did not have a good marketing strategy.



**A large planting of container grown marigolds; the photo was taken on October 15th.
Photo: Stanton Gill**

It might be time to try marigolds out again for late summer to fall flowering plants. In India, the marigold, which is also called ‘Genda’, is used for religious ceremonies and for weddings. We have a growing population of people from India living in central Maryland. This audience may be more receptive to the idea of fall-blooming marigolds. Also, this audience could be explored to see if supplying marigolds for wedding has potential.

I asked a close friend from southern India to comment on the demand for marigolds in India’s culture.

Here is what Venkat responded:

“The article looks great. One of my neighbors has this Marigold plant in their backyard and the flowers are very beautiful. Yes, Indians consume a lot of these flowers during religious ceremonies. This is very popular as it is easy to transport and no worries that the petals will break as it is a small flower.

We really miss this flower during religious holidays and Housewarming and also marriages. At the Hindu temples they use these flowers every day and during the festival days they consume a lot. They not only make garlands to wear around the neck but also they are decorated around the main doors and pillars (almost like Christmas lights decoration in a small way). There will be a huge demand to have bags of these flowers during Dussehra festival (Celebrated on 15th October 2021) and Diwali (4th November 2021) in Grocery stores where the Indian population is there (Ellicott City / Columbia) and Ashburn VA. Indians don’t prefer to have this Flower in a bouquet as these flowers are used to make Garlands or keep on offering one flower at a time to God while chanting some Hindu prayers. If you Google “ Marigold flower In Indian festivals” there will be many pictures showing how they decorate.

The Day of the Dead is another date for potential marigold sales. The *Day of the Dead* is a holiday celebrated on the 1st and 2nd of November. It originated and is mostly observed in Mexico. Marigold flowers are used extensively to honor ancestors. They lay down a chain of marigold flowers to guide dead ancestors to the altar.”

Back to the insect part of my part of this project. I found several western flower thrips in the flowers but no real significant damage to the foliage of the plants. We started releasing the predacious mite, *Amblyseius cucumeris*, on the marigolds to serve as banker plants for thrips control on other crops. We also released *Orius insidiosus*, minute pirate bugs, on the marigolds, which served as excellent banker plants.

One other observation- I have been recording pollinator activity on the marigolds in September and October and the flowers are extremely popular and visited often by native bumble bee species. The plants could be marketed as an excellent source of nectar and pollen for pollinator activity in a landscape. I think it is time to look again at marigolds as potential later summer/fall crop for the horticulture industry.

Cut Flower Three Day Course in March of 2022

By: Stanton Gill

We are pulling together a three day short course on cut flower production in the last part of March 2022. We are looking at March 29, 30, and 31. but nothing is finalized yet. We will send details of this course later this fall as we develop the topics. If you have specific topics you would like covered please send them to me at Sgill@umd.edu

Conferences

December 16, 2021

Biological Control Conference

Organized by University of Maryland Extension and MNLGA; Registration will be done through MNLGA

Registration information will be provided when available

Location: Maritime Institute, Linthicum Heights, MD

2022 Advanced Landscape IPM PHC Short Course

This is a recertification short course for arborists, landscapers, IPM consultants, horticulturalists, professional gardeners, and others responsible for urban plant management. The course LECTURES will be VIRTUAL (online). In addition, there will be an IN-PERSON LAB held over two days (available to a limited number of course attendees). Coordinators: Drs. Paula Shrewsbury and Mike Raupp, Dept. of Entomology, University of Maryland

Lecture (virtual) Dates: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday; January 4, 5 and 6 AND January 11, 12, and 13

Lab (in-person) dates: Tuesday and Wednesday January 18 and 19

Course and Registration* Information: <https://landscapeipmphc.weebly.com/>

Questions contact: Amy Yaich, 301-405-3911, umdentomology@umd.edu

January 5 - 7, 2022

MANTS

Location: Baltimore Convention Center

February 17 and 18, 2022

Chesapeake Green Horticulture Symposium

Location: Maritime Institute, Linthicum Heights, MD

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